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**COVENTRY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 12, 2013) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Samantha Higgins of Coventry High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year. Higgins is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Coventry High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Higgins as Rhode Island's best high school volleyball player. Higgins joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kim Glass (2001-02, Horseshoe HS, Penn.), Kim Willoughby (1998-99, 1999-00, Assumption HS, La.) and Ogonna Nnamani (1999-00, University HS, Ill).

The 5-foot-10 senior middle hitter and middle blocker led the Knotty Oakers to a 19-0 record and a third straight Division I state title this past season. Despite missing five matches with a thumb injury, Higgins recorded 128 kills, 36 blocks, 22 digs and 20 service aces. The Division I Player of the Year, she was a two-time First Team All-State selection and a two-time Division I state tournament MVP.

Higgins has maintained a weighted 4.13 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered on behalf of multiple area-beautification projects in addition to donating her time locally with an anti-bullying campaign and as a youth volleyball coach.

"Samantha has developed the skills that make her the go-to player on Coventry's team and the most dangerous attacker and defender on the court," said Victoria Tefft, head coach of North Kingstown High. "She consistently demonstrates knowledge of the game, court sense ability to attack and defend in pressure situations and the ability to finish plays."

Higgins remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Higgins joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Players of the Year Taylor Stevens (2012-2013, Ponaganset High School), Kelsey Lace (2011-12, Mount Saint Charles Academy), Elise Walsh (2010-11 & 2009-10, The Prout School), Katie Walsh (2008-09, The Prout School) and Sam Andreozzi (2007-08, North Kingstown) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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