

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**DESERT VISTA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 11, 2014) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Jenna Tunnell of Desert Vista High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year. Tunnell is the first Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Desert Vista 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 Tunnell as Arizona's best high school volleyball player. Tunnell 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-11 senior setter and opposite hitter led the Thunder to a 41-3 record and the Division I state title this past season. The 2014 Arizona Republic Big School Player of the Year, Tunnell dished out 500 assists and compiled 309 kills, 199 digs, 87 blocks and 41 service aces while posing a .478 kill percentage. She is a 2014 American Volleyball Coaches Association Under Armour First Team All-America selection and she tallied 22 assists and 21 kills in the state final win over Hamilton.

Tunnell has maintained a 3.99 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she has volunteered locally on behalf of her church youth group and as a volleyball camp counselor.

"Jenna Tunnell is an amazing athlete who makes the extraordinary look ordinary," said Desert Vista High head coach Molly West. "She is a go-to player who loves to embrace the big opportunities. Her ability to handle the tough situations and the pressure of big matches is a gift, both mentally and physically."

Tunnell has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at California's Pepperdine University in the fall of 2015.

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.

Tunnell joins recent Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Players of the Year Sarah Sponcil (2013-14 & 2012-13, Veritas Preparatory Academy), Bianca Arellano (2011-12, Xavier College Prep.), Madison Kingdon (2010-11, Sunnyslope High School), Stephanie Preach (2009-10 & 2008-09, Xavier College Prep.), and Cat Highmark (2007-08, Chaparral) 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.

###