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**GATORADE® NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:  
MIKAELA FOECKE**

*Silver Medalist and Pro Beach Volleyball Player April Ross Surprises  
Standout with Elite Honor*

**Fort Madison, IA** (December 16, 2014) – In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Mikaela Foecke of Holy Trinity Catholic High School (Fort Madison, Iowa) as its 2014-15 Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year. Foecke was surprised with the news at school by silver medalist April Ross, who earned Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year honors in 1999-00.

“I still remember the day when I was honored as the Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year and winning the award is one of the most memorable moments in my career,” said Ross. “It’s such a rare accomplishment, so I was honored to be able to be a part of today’s celebration by surprising Mikaela with the award.”

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 Foecke as the nation’s best high school volleyball player. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select Foecke from more than 430,000 high school volleyball players nationwide. Foecke is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Female High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 6-foot-3 senior middle blocker led the Crusaders to a 48-4 record and the Class 1A state championship this past season. The state’s returning Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year, Foecke recorded 812 kills, 270 digs, 170 service aces and 95 blocks. A member of the American Family Insurance All-USA Preseason Volleyball First Team, she was also the Iowa Girls Coaches Association co-Player of the Year, captain of the Class 1A All-State Tournament Team and was selected for the Iowa Girls Coaches Association and the Des Moines Register Elite All-State teams. A 2014-15 Under Armour First Team All-America honoree, Foecke started for the U.S. Women’s Junior National Team that won a gold medal at the U-20 NORCECA Continental Championships this past July, and finished her prep career with a state-record 2,813 kills.

Foecke has maintained a 4.10 GPA in the classroom. A member of the student council and an officer in the local 4-H club, she has volunteered on behalf of area food drives, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, youth volleyball programs, city clean-up initiatives and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

"In a state currently top heavy with elite volleyball talent, Foecke has been without peer for at least the past two years," said John Tawa, Publisher of PrepVolleyball.com. "Though she plays 'small-school ball,' she's a big-time performer, possessing the arm swing and power to dominate anywhere along the net, as well as the agility of a libero in a 6-3 body. Foecke can score against anyone at any time and could be a [collegiate] All-America performer early."

Foecke has verbally committed to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska beginning in the fall of 2015.

"Without question, Mikaela is deserving of recognition as the nation's best high school volleyball player based on her statistics on the field and the impact her accomplishments have had on Holy Trinity Catholic's success," said Gatorade Vice President, Brand Marketing Morgan Flatley. "But she is also a shining example to peers and aspiring young athletes of what a leader and a student-athlete should be. She represents everything we hope for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient."

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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- WNBA all-time leading scorer and rebounder Lisa Leslie
- NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at

<http://www.gatorade.com/poy>, on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

**ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
2014-15	Mikaela Foecke	Holy Trinity Catholic/Fort Madison, IA	High School Senior
2013-14	Alexa Filley	Assumption/Louisville, KY	Auburn University
2012-13	Lauren Carlini	West Aurora/West Aurora, IL	University of Wisconsin
2011-12	Jordan Burgess	Berkeley Prep/Tampa, FL	Stanford University
2010-11	Krista Vansant	Redlands East Valley HS/Redlands, CA	University of Washington
2009-10	Ashley Wittman	Shakopee/Shakopee, MN	University of Minnesota
2008-09	Gina Mancuso	Papillion-La Vista/Papillion, NE	University of Nebraska
2007-08	Kelly Murphy	Joliet Catholic/Joliet, IL	USA Volleyball
2006-07	Alix Klineman	Mira Costa/Manhattan Beach, CA	USA Volleyball
2005-06	Megan Hodge	Riverside/Durham, NC	USA Volleyball
2004-05	Cynthia Barboza	Wilson Classical/Long Beach, CA	LIU JO Volley Modena (Italy)
2003-04	Cynthia Barboza	Wilson Classical/Long Beach, CA	LIU JO Volley Modena (Italy)
2002-03	Kristin Richards	Timpanogos/Orem, UT	Campinas Voleibol (Brazil)
2001-02	Bre Ladd	Canyon Del Oro/Tucson, AZ	Univ. Of Arizona Graduate
2000-01	Ogonna Nnamani	University/Normal, IL	USA Volleyball
1999-00	April Ross	Newport Harbor/Newport Beach, CA	AVP Pro Beach Volleyball
1998-99	Logan Tom	Highland/Salt Lake City, UT	USA Volleyball
1997-98	Sara Sandrik	Pelham/Pelham, AL	Stanford Graduate
1996-97	Denise Boylan	Benet Academy/Lisle, IL	Notre Dame Graduate
1995-96	Kerri Walsh	Archbishop Mitty/San Jose, CA	AVP Pro Beach Volleyball