

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**XAVIER COLLEGE PREP. STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 8, 2015) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Khalia Lanier of Xavier College Prep. as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year. Lanier is the third Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Xavier College Prep..

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 Lanier as Arizona's best high school volleyball player. Lanier 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 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter recorded 496 kills, 324 digs and 28 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .438 and leading the Gators (34-8) to the Division I state final this past season. A 2015 Under Armour First Team All-American as named by the American Volleyball Coaches Association and the nation's No. 1 recruit as rated by PrepVolleyball.com, Lanier was a member of the U.S. Girls' Youth National Volleyball Team, leading a squad of elite prep players to the 2015 FIVB Girls' U18 World Championship final in Peru last summer.

Lanier has maintained a 4.21 weighted GPA in the classroom. Lanier donated countless hours over nine days in the summer of 2014 working in an orphanage in Komga, South Africa. Her duties in the village near the continent's southeast coast centered around teaching preschool-aged children. She has also volunteered on behalf of the Desert Mission Food Bank, providing emergency food assistance to help families in North Phoenix.

"Khalia Lanier is a remarkable player with great athletic ability," said Courtney Johnson, head coach at Liberty High. "She has the ability to see the court in the air and strategically place the ball, but she also has the power and strength to put the ball down. I noticed that her team trusts her 100 percent. Whether she was in the front or back row they always tried to get her involved in the play."

Lanier has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Southern California in the fall of 2016.

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.

Lanier joins recent Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Players of the Year Jenna Tunnell (2014-15, Desert Vista High School), 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 High School) 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.

###