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Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**PARAMUS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY 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 Maria Bellinger of Paramus High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year. Bellinger is the third Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Paramus 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 Bellinger as New Jersey's best high school volleyball player. Bellinger 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-1 senior outside hitter recorded 434 kills, 159 digs and 42 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .508 and a hitting percentage of .446 this past season, leading the Spartans (21-6) to the Group 3 state championship match. The 2015 Star Ledger State Player of the Year, Bellinger is a two-time Bergen Record North Jersey Player of the Year selection and a two-time First Team All-State honoree. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,527 kills and 664 digs.

Bellinger has maintained a weighted 3.85 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit the American Cancer Society and autism research and as a youth volleyball coach.

"Maria Bellinger has been exceptional on the court for Paramus throughout her career," said Karen Klingner, head coach of Indian Hills High. "She is a dynamic hitter than can attack effectively from both the front and back row and has a jump serve that can be difficult to handle."

Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Bellinger inked a financial-aid agreement that paves the way for her to enroll at the University of Delaware. She is expected to graduate from high school this month and matriculate in the spring semester.

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.

Bellinger joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Players of the Year Caitlyn Floyd (2014-15, Immaculate Heart Academy), Nia Reed (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Immaculate Heart Academy), Aiyana Whitney (2010-11, Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan), Ariel Scott (2009-10 & 2008-09, Immaculate Heart Academy) and Amanda Alles (2007-08, Hunterdon Central 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.

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