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**FAYETTEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Ella May Powell of Fayetteville High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year. Powell is the third Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fayetteville 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 Powell as Arkansas's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Powell joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert HS, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public HS, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View HS, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas HS, Fla.).

The returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 6-foot junior setter led the Bulldogs to a 30-6 record and the Class 7A state championship this past season. Powell amassed 917 assists, 298 digs, 124 kills, 75 service aces and 45 blocks. A two-time member of the All-Arkansas Preps First Team, Powell was a member of the 2016 USA Volleyball Girls' Youth National Team, which placed second at the North, Central American and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation (NORCECA) Girls' U18 Continental Championship this past September. She concluded her junior year with 2,931 assists in her prep volleyball career.

Powell has volunteered locally with her school's chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a youth volleyball coach. "Ella May Powell is involved in every single play, and I see the difference she makes for the Bulldogs," said Julie Rowan, head coach of Bentonville West High. "In addition to her fantastic setting, she is a force to be reckoned with from the service line."

Powell has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Washington beginning in the fall of 2018.

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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Two-time winner Powell joins Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Players of the Year Haley Warner (2014-15, Fayetteville High School), Drew Jones (2013-14, SoutHigh Schoolide High School), Aubrey Edie (2012-13, Fayetteville High School), Shayne Wiedemann (2011-12, Bentonville High School), Lizzy Briones (2010-11, Siloam Springs High School), Hannah Allison (2009-10 & 2008-09, Siloam Springs High School) and Cayla Fielder (2007-08, Westside High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Powell will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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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