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**RHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Alana Hruska of RHAM High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year. Hruska is the third Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from RHAM 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 Hruska as Connecticut'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, Hruska joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlerl 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 6-foot-3 junior outside hitter and middle blocker led the Sachems to a 30-3 record and the Class L state championship this past season. Hruska recorded 550 kills, 109 blocks and 58 service aces. A MaxPreps Underclass All-American, she was named Player of the Year by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association.

Hruska has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, a food bank, youth volleyball programs and a homeless shelter. "Hruska has grown into a tough and confident competitor, one who dominates the court, doesn't get rattled and gets the job done for her team," said Laura Arena, head coach at Farmington High. "She was an intimidating presence and a productive blocker. She also serves aggressively and strategically."

Hruska has maintained a 3.78 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

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.

Hruska joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Players of the Year Gabriela Vazquez (2015-16, Platt High School), Izzy Taylor (2014-15, Darien High School), Sarah Veilleux (2013-14, RHAM High School), Marina Rose (2012-13, Coventry High School), Kyley Reed (2011-12, Rocky Hill High School), Madison McCaffery (2010-11, Fairfield Ludlowe High School), Tessa Smolinski (2009-10, RHAM High School), Erika Videtto (2008-09, Greenwich High School) and Janice Ehorn (2007-08, Amity Regional High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hruska 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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