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**EAST RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 Stephanie Samedy of East Ridge High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year. Samedy is the first Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from East Ridge 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 Samedy as Florida'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, Samedy 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 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter recorded 442 kills, 196 digs and 38 service aces this past season, leading the Knights (21-4) to the regional semifinals. A 2016-17 Under Armour First Team All-American, Samedy is a member of the U.S. Women's Junior National Team and was selected Florida Dairy Farmers Miss Volleyball.

Samedy has volunteered locally on behalf of the New Image Youth Center and Matthew's Hope Ministries for homeless outreach. "Stephanie Samedy is an amazing athlete and a great competitor," said Jeannie Clark, head coach at Harmony High. "By the end of the year, they were using her in almost every play and we could not shut her down. She's very talented, but she's also a very humble player, who doesn't flaunt her abilities on the court."

Samedy has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Samedy joins recent Gatorade Florida Volleyball Players of the Year Jac'cara Walker (2015-16, P.K. Yonge), Courtney Furlong (2014-15, Oviedo High School), Christina Ambrose (2013-14, Winter Park High School), Lindsey Owens (2012-13, Bishop Moore High School), Jordan Burgess (2011-12 & 2010-11, Berkeley Preparatory School), Maddie Martin (2009-10, H.B. Plant High School), Jessica Yingling (2008-09, Timber Creek High School) and Kellie Catanach (2007-08, H.B. Plant) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Samedy 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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