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**SACRED HEART ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Paige Hammons of Sacred Heart Academy as its 2016-17 Gatorade Kentucky Volleyball Player of the Year. Hammons is the third Gatorade Kentucky Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sacred Heart Academy.

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 Hammons as Kentucky'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, Hammons joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlerlert 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 led the Valkyries to a 40-4 record and a state championship this past season. Hammons recorded 606 kills, 280 digs, 62 blocks and 38 service aces. A 2016-17 Under Armour First Team All-American, she is a member of the U.S. Women's Junior National Team and was named Miss Kentucky Volleyball by the Kentucky Volleyball Coaches Association.

Hammons has volunteered locally on behalf of a senior living facility and youth volleyball programs. "Paige Hammons is one of the best players I've seen play in the state of Kentucky over the past 28 years," said Ron Kordes, head coach at Assumption High. "She's a six-rotation player with hops and a very live arm. She's also a great kid and a wonderful teammate."

Hammons has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Florida 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.

Hammons joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Volleyball Players of the Year Morgan Hentz (2015-16, Notre Dame Academy), Merideth Jewell (2014-15, Mercy Academy), Alexa Filley (2013-14, Assumption High School), Courtney Crable (2012-13, Mercy Academy), Katie George (2011-12, Assumption High School), Jeni Houser (2010-11, Assumption High School), Deja McClendon (2009-10, duPont Manual High School), Casey Garvey (2008-09, Mercy Academy) and Kaitlynn James (2007-08, Assumption High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hammons 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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