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**ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSOURI VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 17, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Jena Otec of St. Pius X High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Missouri Volleyball Player of the Year. Otec is the first Gatorade Missouri Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Pius X 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 Otec as Missouri'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, Otec 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 5-foot-10 senior outside hitter led the Lancers to a 36-4 record and the Class 2 state championship this past season. Otec tallied 491 kills, 343 digs, 43 blocks and 42 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .516 and a hitting percentage of .400. A three-time First Team All-State selection, she concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,748 kills and 1,349 digs.

Otec has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach. "Jena Otec is deadly from anywhere on the floor and is a great team player," said Julie Ward, head coach of Farmington High. "She is the best player we have seen in the past four years."

Otec has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Purdue University 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.

Otec joins recent Gatorade Missouri Volleyball Players of the Year Meghan Donovan (2015-16, Villa Duchesne High School), Madison Duello (2014-15, Liberty High School), Lily Johnson (2013-14, Lafayette High School), Stephanie Campbell (2012-13, Lafayette High School), Alyssa Jensen (2011-12, St. Joseph's Academy), Jade Hayes (2010-11 & 2009-10, Ozark High School), Alison Landwehr (2008-09, Parkway West High School) and Allie Huffman (2007-08, Lee's Summit West High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Otec 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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