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**SENTINEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA 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 Elsa Godwin of Sentinel High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Montana Volleyball Player of the Year. Godwin is the first Gatorade Montana Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sentinel 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 Godwin as Montana'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, Godwin 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 junior outside hitter led the Spartans to a 27-0 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Godwin tallied 287 kills, 192 digs and 40 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .457. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she tallied 49 kills and 54 digs in the Spartans' four-match state tournament run to complete their perfect season.

Godwin has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church youth group. "Not only was Elsa an efficient attacker, but her ball control was a central part of what Sentinel did this season," said Amy Roberts, head coach of Big Sky High. "Her defense and passing is huge, and she is a threat in the frontcourt as well as offensively in the backcourt."

Godwin has maintained a 4.0 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.

Godwin joins recent Gatorade Montana Volleyball Players of the Year Caitlin Lonergan (2015-16, Bozeman High School), Taylor Mims (2014-15, Billings Senior High School), Jace Henderson (2013-14 & 2012-13, Billings Senior High School), Kyndal Williams (2011-12, Helena High School), Monica Grimsrud (2010-11, Helena High School), Kelsey Williams (2009-10, Helena High School), Emily Carroll (2008-09, Billings Senior High School) and Ashley Welborn (2007-08, Billings Senior High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Godwin 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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