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**RAMAPO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Elena Montgomery of Ramapo High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year. Montgomery is the second Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ramapo 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 Montgomery as New Jersey'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, Montgomery 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 junior outside hitter led the Raiders to a 22-3 record and the Group 2 state championship this past season. Montgomery tallied 312 kills, 88 digs, 34 service aces and 29 blocks. A First Team All-State selection, she recorded 23 kills in a 2-1 win over previously unbeaten River Dell High in the state title match.

A certified scuba diver, Montgomery has volunteered locally as a youth tutor and volleyball coach. "Elena was just as dangerous from the back row as she was from the front row," said Caryn Schanstone, head coach of Northern Highlands High. "I mean, how many high school teams go to the back-row player in a crunch-time situation to win a state title?"

Montgomery has maintained a weighted 3.99 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.

Montgomery joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Players of the Year Maria Bellinger (2015-16, Paramus High School), Caitlyn Floyd (2014-15, Immaculate Heart Academy), Nia Reed (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Immaculate Heart Academy), Aiyana Whitney (2010-11, Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan), Ariel Scott (2009-10 & 2008-09, Immaculate Heart Academy) and Amanda Alles (2007-08, Hunterdon Central High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Montgomery 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.