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**BRECKSVILLE-BROADVIEW HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 Shannon Williams of Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year. Williams is the first Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Brecksville-Broadview Heights 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 Williams as Ohio'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, Williams 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-8 junior setter led the Bees to a 28-1 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Williams amassed 1,187 assists, 268 digs, 141 kills and 34 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .480 and a hitting percentage of .388. A MaxPreps Second Team All-American and a Division I First Team All-State selection, she recorded 50 assists, 20 digs and three blocks as the Bees knocked off three-time defending champion Mount Notre Dame High in the state final.

A three-year member of her school's student council, Williams has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit the homeless and as a youth volleyball coach. "Shannon is a very dynamic and athletic player," said Jim BeHarry, head coach of Padua Franciscan High. "There is no way Brecksville could have accomplished what they did this year without her. She is a six-rotation and five-tool player."

Williams has maintained a 3.56 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Cincinnati beginning in the fall of 2018.

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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Players of the Year Hunter Atherton (2015-16, Dublin Coffman High School), Margo Wolf (2014-15, Mount Notre Dame High School), Abby Detering (2013-14, Lake Catholic High School), Michelle Strizak (2012-13, Mount Notre Dame High School), Megan Courtney (2011-12, Archbishop Alter High School), Deme Morales (2010-11, Steele High School), Dani Reinert (2009-10, Ursuline Academy), Lauren Whyte (2008-09, Olmsted Falls High School) and Missy Harpenau (2007-08, Mother of Mercy High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Williams 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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