

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**PARKLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Sam Graver of Parkland High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Player of the Year. Graver is the third Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Parkland 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 Graver as Pennsylvania'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, Graver 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 recorded 617 kills, 243 digs, 47 blocks and 27 service aces this past season, leading the Trojans (36-7-4) to the Class 4A state finals. An All-state selection, Graver was also named District 11 MVP, Eastern Pennsylvania Conference MVP and the LehighValleyLive.com Volleyball Player of the Year.

Graver has served as an elementary school tutor and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Sam Graver is an all-around player with fantastic skills in both the front and back row," said Donna Roman, head coach at Freedom High. "She's an unbelievably dynamic hitter, but she's also a solid blocker and a very strong defensive player."

Graver has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at La Salle 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.

Graver joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Players of the Year Kristin Krause (2015-16, Parkland High School), Meg Morningstar (2014-15, North Allegheny High School), Taylor Leath (2013-14, State College Area High School), Kelly Robertson (2012-13, Parkland High School), Alexa Swann (2011-12, Brandywine Heights Area High School), Shelbey Manthorpe (2010-11, Merion Mercy Academy), Kate Begor (2009-10, Mt. Lebanon High School), Danielle Carrozza (2008-09, Merion Mercy Academy) and Helen Fitzpatrick (2007-08, Merion Mercy Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Graver 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.

###