

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Maile Somera of Barrington High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year. Somera is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Barrington 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 Somera as Rhode Island'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, Somera 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-9 sophomore outside hitter led the Eagles to a 20-2 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Somera tallied 362 kills, 231 digs and 82 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .536 and a hitting percentage of .402. The 2016 Division I Player of the Year, Somera led Barrington to the Division II state title in 2015 and was named the tournament MVP. She concluded her sophomore year with 512 total kills in her prep volleyball career.

A member of her school's debate club and environmental club, Somera has volunteered locally as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research and as a math tutor. "Maile is a very unique player," said Josh Bednarczyk, head coach of Exeter-West Greenwich High. "She has a combination of athleticism and the ability to read the game and anticipate beyond her age. Offensively and defensively she is in complete control."

Somera has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Somera joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Players of the Year Jenna Bridges (2015-16, Exeter-West Greenwich High School), Jen Donnelly (2014-15, Exeter-West Greenwich High School), Samantha Higgins (2013-14, Coventry High School), Taylor Stevens (2012-13, Ponaganset High School), Kelsey Lace (2011-12, Mount Saint Charles Academy), Elise Walsh (2010-11 & 2009-10, The Prout School), Katie Walsh (2008-09, The Prout School) and Sam Andreozzi (2007-08, North Kingstown High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Somera 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).

###