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**HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Sami Slaughter of Harrisburg High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Dakota Volleyball Player of the Year. Slaughter is the first Gatorade South Dakota Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrisburg 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 Slaughter as South Dakota'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, Slaughter 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-1 senior middle hitter led the Tigers to a 24-2 record and the Class AA state championship this past season. Slaughter tallied 458 kills, 327 digs, 85 blocks and 65 service aces, while posting a kill percentage of .420. A MaxPreps Third Team All-American, Slaughter is a three-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,205 kills, 581 digs and 307 blocks.

Slaughter was one of five students from Harrisburg selected as a "Champion of Character" and, as a result, will represent her school as a mentor to area elementary and middle-school students. She has also volunteered locally with the Humane Society of Sioux Falls and as a youth volleyball and basketball coach. "Sami has a killer jump serve and can attack at all areas on the court," said Holly Lynch, head coach of Roosevelt High. "She finished her season in the championship match against us with 39 kills. If Harrisburg didn't have her, we might have won!"

Slaughter has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Slaughter joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Volleyball Players of the Year Jenna Reiff (2015-16, Chester High School), Taryn Kloth (2014-15, O'Gorman High School), Maggie DeJong (2013-14 & 2012-13, Roosevelt High School), Erin Radke (2011-12, Lincoln High School), Wagner Larson (2010-11, Roosevelt High School), Marcelina Glab (2009-10, Watertown High School), Heather Goehring (2008-09, Roosevelt High School) and Amber Wollschlager (2007-08, Milbank High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Slaughter 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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