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**BRIGHTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Dani Barton of Brighton High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Utah Volleyball Player of the Year. Barton is the first Gatorade Utah Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Brighton 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 Barton as Utah'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, Barton joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlerlert 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 senior outside hitter recorded 418 kills, 268 digs, 71 blocks and 36 service aces this past season, leading the Bengals (29-5) to a fifth-place finish in the Class 5A state tournament. A 2016-17 Under Armour Second Team All-American, Barton is a two-time First Team All-State honoree and was named Miss Volleyball by the Deseret News.

Barton has volunteered locally on behalf of her church, Brighton High's service learning program and youth volleyball camps. "Dani Barton is the next big thing to come out of Utah," said Clint Barnes, head coach at Taylorsville High. "She's got great speed and agility, and her hitting and blocking are both above average. She's a very talented indoor player, as well as a great beach player, and she's willing to make her peers better any way she can."

Barton has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Utah 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.

Barton joins recent Gatorade Utah Volleyball Players of the Year Jaiden Farr (2015-16, Morgan High School), Alexsa Parker (2014-15, Snow Canyon High School), Jessie Jorgensen (2013-14, Timpview High School), McKenzie Willey (2012-13, Lone Peak High School), Ciara Parker (2011-12, Snow Canyon High School), Ashley Garfield (2010-11, Morgan High School), Danica Mendivil (2009-10, Pleasant Grove High School), Brooke McAlister (2008-09, Pleasant Grove High School) and Chelsey Garfield (2007-08, Morgan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Barton 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.