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**GORHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MAINE GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Emily Esposito of Gorham High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Esposito is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gorham 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 court, distinguishes Esposito as Maine's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Esposito joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06, Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-10 senior guard led the Rams to a 21-0 record and their second straight Class AA state title this past season. Esposito averaged 19.8 points, 5.7 rebounds and 4.1 assists per game while shooting 55.2 percent from inside the arc. A statewide Miss Basketball finalist, she concluded her prep career with 1,446 points and led her team to a 42-game winning streak spanning two seasons.

A member of the National Honor Society, Esposito has volunteered locally on behalf of her church preschool, an area homeless shelter and participated in a service-mission trip to Nicaragua. "Emily Esposito is not only the best player by far in the state right now, but she is also of the best players ever to play in Maine," said Brody Artes, head coach of Windham High. "She shows passion for competition and also handles herself extremely well on the floor."

Esposito has maintained a 92.9 average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Villanova 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.

Esposito joins recent Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Players of the Year Nia Irving (2015-16 & 2014-15, Lawrence High School), Allie Clement (2013-14 & 2012-13, Catherine McAuley High School), Meghan Gribbin (2011-12, Windham High School), Niki Taylor (2010-11 & 2009-10, York High School), Morgan Frame (2008-09, Waterville High School), Rachael Mack (2007-08, Cony High School), and Ashley Cimino (2006-07, McAuley High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Emily 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 us on Twitter. 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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