

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**ELK RIVER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MINNESOTA 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 Gabi Haack of Elk River High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Haack is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Elk River 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 Haack as Minnesota'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, Haack 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-9 senior guard had led the Elk to a 27-0 record and the sectional championship game at the time of her selection. Haack averaged 26.1 points, 6.7 rebounds, 2.7 assists and 1.6 steals through 27 games. A statewide Miss Basketball nominee, she is a three-time All-Northwest Suburban Conference honoree.

A devoted member of her church youth group and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Haack has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs. "Gabi Haack is one of the toughest players we've had to play against," said Josh Steck, head coach at Champlin Park High. "She's a very smart offensive player, more than capable of taking games over. Defensively, she makes things very tough for opponents."

Haack has maintained a 3.82 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Bradley University (Ill.) 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.

Haack joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Koenen (2015-16, Shakopee High School), Madison Guebert (2014-15, Eastview High School), Chase Coley (2013-14, Washburn High School), Rebekah Dahlman (2012-13 & 2011-12, Braham Area High School), Rachel Banham (2010-11, Lakeville North High School), Sari Noga (2009-10, Parkers Prairie High School), Tayler Hill (2008-09 & 2007-08, Minneapolis South High School), and Janessa Wolff (2006-07, Park Rapids Area High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Gabi 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.

###