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**WAHPETON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA 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 Tylee Irwin of Wahpeton High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Irwin is the second Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wahpeton 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 Irwin as North Dakota'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, Irwin 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 6-foot senior guard and forward had led the Huskies to a 19-5 record and a berth in the Class A state tournament at the time of her selection. Irwin averaged 25.1 points, 9.5 rebounds and 2.2 steals per game while shooting 77 percent from the free throw line through 24 games. She is a two-time First Team All-State selection and a three-time First Team All-Eastern Dakota Conference honoree.

A member of her school's student council and Spanish Club, Irwin has volunteered locally at an animal shelter and as a peer mentor. "It has been fun to watch Tylee Irwin play," said Jimmy Howard, head coach at Valley City High. "She does it all on the court. She can defend, rebound, score and set her teammates up. She is the most complete player I have seen since I have been in North Dakota."

Irwin has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at South Dakota State 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.

Irwin joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Sarah Jacobson (2015-16 & 2013-14, Shanley High School), Hannah Stewart (2014-15, Bishop Ryan Catholic High School), Hannah Larson (2012-13, Century High School), Holly Johnson (2011-12, Minot High School), Caitlin Farroh (2010-11, Grand Forks Central High School), Meghan Roehrich (2009-10, Fargo South High School), Kelsey Sigl (2008-09, Bismarck High School), Alex Feeney (2007-08, Bismarck High School), and Jessica Kielpinski (2006-07, Mandan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tylee 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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