

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**CHOCTAW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® OKLAHOMA 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 Ana Llanusa of Choctaw High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Llanusa is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Choctaw 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 Llanusa as Oklahoma'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, Llanusa 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-11 senior guard had led the Yellowjackets to a 23-2 record and a berth in the Class 6A state tournament at the time of her selection. Llanusa averaged 19.4 points, 5.6 rebounds and 3.5 assists per game while shooting 51 percent from the inside the arc through 25 games. A First Team All-State selection, she is ranked as the nation's No. 32 recruit in the Class of 2017 by espnW HoopGurlz.

Llanusa has volunteered locally on behalf of the Ronald McDonald House, the Mid-Del Youth and Family Center and the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. "Ana Llanusa is an extremely versatile player who can excel at multiple positions," said Choctaw High head coach Ryan Maloney. "She has the basketball IQ to succeed in multiple aspects of our system. She motivates and inspires her teammates through her will to win. Her willingness to listen to coaching and try new tactics allows her to compete and succeed at the highest level."

Llanusa has maintained a 3.74 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Oklahoma 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.

Llanusa joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Girls Basketball Players of the Year Aaliyah Wilson (2015-16 & 2014-15, Muskogee High School), Chelsea Dungee (2013-14, Preston High School), Lakota Beatty (2012-13, Anadarko High School), Courtney Walker (2011-12, Edmond Santa Fe High School), Ashley Clark (2010-11, Midwest City High School), Richa Jackson (2009-10, Midwest City High School), Kevi Luper (2008-09, Adair High School), Alyssia Brewer (2007-08, Sapulpa High School), and Angel Goodrich (2006-07, Sequoyah High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ana 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.

###