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**MESQUITE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA 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 Shaylee Gonzales of Mesquite High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Gonzales is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mesquite 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 Gonzales as Arizona'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, Gonzales 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 junior guard led the Wildcats to a 31-1 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Gonzales averaged 19.8 points, 6.6 assists, 5.7 steals and 5.2 rebounds per game. The San Tan Region Player of the Year, she was a First Team All-State selection and earned All-Tournament honors at the Nike Tournament of Champions.

A devoted member of her church youth group and a talented musician, Gonzales has raised funds for cancer awareness and has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving Children and a camp for individuals with special needs. "Shaylee Gonzales is a very, very good basketball player, but what stands out most to me is her work ethic," said Desirae Carranza, head coach at Sierra Linda High. "She works very hard every possession and she just doesn't stop."

Gonzales has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Gonzales joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Players of the Year Najiyah Pack (2015-16, South Mountain High School), Kristine Anigwe (2014-15, Desert Vista High School), Julia Barcello (2013-14, Seton Catholic Preparatory High School), Courtney Ekmark (2012-13, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Shilpa Tummala (2011-12, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Promise Amukamara (2010-11, Apollo High School), Rebecca Woodberry (2009-10, Tolleson High School), Davellyn Whyte (2008-09, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Amy Patton (2007-08, McClintock High School), and Kayla Pedersen (2006-07, Red Mountain High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Shaylee 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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