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## **FOUNTAIN HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Erika Yost of Fountain Hills High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Yost is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Fountain Hills 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 field, distinguishes Yost as Arizona's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Yost joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-04, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.), Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-7 senior forward led the Falcons to an 18-3-1 record and the Conference 3A state championship this past season. Yost scored 54 goals, including both tallies in Fountain Hills' 2-0 win over Trivium Prep in the state final. She recorded 17 multi-goal games and added 20 assists. Yost is a three-time First Team All-State selection and the 2017 AZ Central Small School Player of the Year. She concluded her prep soccer career with 104 goals and 34 assists.

A member of her local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, Yost has volunteered locally with her school's Falcon Leadership Program and as part of multiple community service initiatives through Fountain Hills' National Honor Society. "Erika is dangerously fast and can finish," said Mike Philipp, head coach of Scottsdale Christian High School. "Trying to contain her for a full 80 minutes is very difficult."

Yost has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at the University of Oklahoma beginning 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.

Yost joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Soccer Players of the Year Kelsey Turnbow (2015-16, Pinnacle High School), Bri Hatch (2014-15, Highland High School), Gabi Stoian (2013-14, Pinnacle High School), Jaden DeGracie (2012-13 & 2011-12, Highland High School), Rylie Johnson (2010-11, Hamilton High School), Hilary Zenuk (2009-10, Highland High School), Jessica Petznick (2008-09, Xavier College Preparatory), and Brittany Cole (2007-08 & 2006-07, Corona del Sol High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Erika 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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