

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**COLLINS HILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 19, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Rachel Jones of Collins Hill High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year. Jones is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Collins Hill 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 Jones as Georgia'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, Jones 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-2 junior forward and midfielder scored 41 goals and passed for 11 assists this past season, leading the Eagles to the Class AAAAAAA state quarterfinals. Jones scored in 12 of the 13 games she played, missing seven contests because of two training camps with the U.S. Soccer Under-18 Women's National Team. Jones had 10 multi-goal games, including seven games with at least four tallies. Rated as the No. 8 recruit in the Class of 2018 by TopDrawerSoccer.com, she is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

Jones has volunteered as an elementary-school mentor and as a youth soccer coach. "Rachel is the best player I have seen play in my coaching career," said Mark Karen, head coach of Dacula High School. "Her speed, athleticism, technical ability and finishing are the strongest I have coached against."

Jones has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play soccer on scholarship at the University of North Carolina beginning in the fall of 2018.

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.

Jones joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Soccer Players of the Year Ella Stevens (2015-16 & 2014-15, Grayson High School), Jennifer Westendorf (2013-14, Grayson High School), Rachel Garcia (2012-13, Greater Atlanta Christian School), Emily Sonnett (2011-12, Fellowship Christian School), Morgan Brian (2010-11 & 2009-10, Frederica Academy), Laura Eddy (2008-09, Marist School), Ashley Baker (2007-08, Parkview), and Marah Falle (2006-07, Parkview High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rachel 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.