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**MCGILL-TOOLEN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 16, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kenya McQuirter of McGill-Toolen Catholic High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Volleyball Player of the Year. McQuirter is the fifth Gatorade Alabama Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from McGill-Toolen Catholic 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 McQuirter as Alabama's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, McQuirter joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert HS, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public HS, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View HS, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas HS, Fla.).

The 5-foot-10 junior outside hitter led the Yellow Jackets to a 46-7 record and the Class 7A state championship this past season. McQuirter amassed 516 kills, 292 digs, 89 blocks and 58 service aces. The Al.com Super All-State Player of the Year, she was MVP of the Class 7A state tournament.

A member of her school's Ambassador program, McQuirter has volunteered locally on behalf of Ronald McDonald House charities and youth volleyball camps. "Kenya McQuirter has a great all-around skill set, mentally and physically," said Lacey Powell, head coach at Fairhope High. "We couldn't stop her. If we moved the block, she adjusted or just outjumped us and hit over the block. She never gets frustrated and she never shows an emotional change. She's always there to make sure her team is better."

McQuirter has maintained a 3.75 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.

McQuirter joins recent Gatorade Alabama Volleyball Players of the Year Lauren Chastang (2016-17, Bayside Academy), Sara Carr (2015-16 & 2014-15, Mountain Brook High School), Leah Lawrence (2013-14, Covenant Christian Academy), Virginia Pittman (2012-13, Bayside Academy), Cati Leak (2011-12 & 2010-11, Guntersville High School), Chelsea Wintzinger (2009-10, Huntsville High School), Catherine Rebarchak (2008-09, St. Paul's Episcopal School) and MacKenzie Wilson (2007-08, Grissom High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, McQuirter 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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