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**SOUTH ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA 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 Zoey Keene of South Anchorage High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Player of the Year. Keene is the fifth Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Anchorage 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 Keene as Alaska'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, Keene 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 senior setter recorded 854 assists and 211 digs this past season, leading the Wolverines (29-14-2) to the Cook Inlet Conference Tournament semifinals. Keene also tallied 157 kills, 72 service aces and 57 blocks, posting a kill percentage of .346. An American Volleyball Coaches Association Honorable Mention All-American selection, she was also a First Team All-State honoree.

The president of South's Partners Club, which was awarded the 2017 Inclusive Practices award by the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Keene has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth volleyball coach and referee. "Zoey Keene is an extremely dynamic player, runs the offense as the only setter on the court, and when needed can hammer a ball," said Bobbi Mason, head coach of Chugiak High. "She has great court awareness and understands when to make the correct play."

Keene has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Alaska Fairbanks 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.

Keene joins recent Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Players of the Year Brynn Sulte (2016-17 & 2015-16, Dimond High School), Kayla Sims (2014-15, South Anchorage High School), Leah Swiss (2013-14 & 2012-13, Dimond High School), Morgan Hooe (2011-12, South Anchorage High School), Deanna Nielson (2010-11, Dimond High School), Taylor Adams (2009-10, Dimond High School), Lauren Fulton (2008-09, Dimond High School) and Sarah Hibbert (2007-08, South Anchorage High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Keene 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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