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**IMMACULATE HEART ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Julia Morris of Immaculate Heart Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year. Morris is the fourth Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Immaculate Heart Academy.

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 Morris as New Jersey'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, Morris 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 6-foot senior setter led the Eagles to a 40-1 record, capturing both the state's Non-Public and Tournament of Champions titles this past season. Morris amassed 905 assists, 117 digs, 60 kills, 42 blocks and 35 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .484. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she concluded her prep volleyball career with 2,166 assists.

A peer mentor at Immaculate Heart, Morris has volunteered locally at Camp Acorn, which serves children and adults with a variety of disabilities. She has also donated her time as a youth sports coach and mentor for special-needs children. "Julia runs a highly effective offense and I know she is a big part of making that happen," said Jason Carcich, head coach of Wayne Valley High. "She is refined and deceptive and also has the ability to hit."

Morris has maintained a B average in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Morris joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Volleyball Players of the Year Elena Montgomery (2016-17, Ramapo High School), Maria Bellinger (2015-16, Paramus High School), Caitlyn Floyd (2014-15, Immaculate Heart Academy), Nia Reed (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Immaculate Heart Academy), Aiyana Whitney (2010-11, Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan), Ariel Scott (2009-10 & 2008-09, Immaculate Heart Academy), and Amanda Alles (2007-08, Hunterdon Central High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Morris 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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