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**KELLY WALSH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WYOMING 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 Madison Vinich of Kelly Walsh High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Wyoming Volleyball Player of the Year. Vinich is the fourth Gatorade Wyoming Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kelly Walsh 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 Vinich as Wyoming'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, Vinich 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 outside hitter led the Trojans to a 34-4 record and the Class 4A state championship this past season. Voted as the Class 4A state player of the year, Vinich recorded 355 kills, 169 digs and 26 service aces. She concluded her prep career with the school record for kills (1,574), passing percentage (2.42) and digs (1,027).

A youth sports referee and volunteer basketball coach, Vinich is also a student leader for the Natrona County Reads program and the local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter as well as volunteering her time for the Natrona County Rescue Mission. "Madison Vinich understands that game, the strategy and, of course, has the physical components to be a beast on the court—both front row and back," said Tera Lawler, the head coach at Evanston High. "In my opinion, no other player in Wyoming had that type of impact."

Vinich has maintained a weighted 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She remains undecided on 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.

Vinich joins recent Gatorade Wyoming Volleyball Players of the Year Kalina Smith (2016-17, Cambell County High School), Cosette Stellern (2015-16 & 2014-15, Cheyenne East High School), Sydney Matheny (2013-14, Campbell County High School), Sally Sanders (2012-13, East High School), Caitlin McInerney (2011-12, Laramie High School), Meghan Sipe (2010-11, Cheyenne East High School), Paige Hellbaum (2009-10, Wheatland High School), and Emily Rochelle (2008-09 & 2007-08, Kelly Walsh High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Vinich 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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