

**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)**

**SALEM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® UTAH GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Lauren Gustin of Salem Hills High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Utah Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Gustin is the first Gatorade Utah Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Salem Hills 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 Gustin as Utah's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Gustin joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot senior forward led the Skyhawks to a 24-1 record and the Class 4A state championship this past season. Gustin averaged 29.3 points, 17.2 rebounds and 2.4 steals per game. MVP of the Class 4A state tournament, she is a three-time All-State honoree—twice in Utah and once in Arizona.

A youth leader in her church, Gustin has volunteered on behalf of A Child's Hope Foundation, Locks of Love and a nursing home. "Lauren Gustin is a complete player who is nearly impossible to defend," said Camie Oakey, head coach at Springville High. "She's comfortable anywhere on the floor and she brings out the best in her team. It's rare to find a player who plays hard every minute she's on the floor, but she does."

Gustin has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Idaho beginning 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.

Gustin joins recent Gatorade Utah Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Moeaki (2016-17, American Fork High School), Kennedy Redding (2015-16, Bountiful High School), Lindsey Jensen (2014-15, Sky View High School), Haley Bodnar (2013-14, Desert Hills High School), Malia Nawahine (2012-13, Springville High School), Brittney Martin (2011-12, Syracuse High School), Lexi Eaton (2010-11 & 2009-10, Springville High School), Haley Holmstead (2008-09, American Fork High School), Dani Peterson (2007-08, Skyline High School), and Tasha Dickey (2006-07, Brighton High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lauren 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/>.

###