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## **PALO VERDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEVADA GIRLS SOCCER PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 18, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Olivia Packer of Palo Verde High School** as its **2017-18 Gatorade Nevada Girls Soccer Player of the Year**. Packer is the third Gatorade Nevada Girls Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Palo Verde 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 Packer as Nevada's best high school girls soccer player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Packer joins an elite alumni association of past state soccer award-winners, including Alexi Lalas (1987-88, Cranbrook HS, Mich.), Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel HS, Calif.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Heather O'Reilly (2001-02, 2002-03, East Brunswick HS, N.J.), Matt Besler (2004-05, Blue Valley West HS, Kans.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire HS, Mass.) and Mallory Pugh (2014-15, Mountain Vista HS, Colo.).

The 5-foot-5 senior forward scored 30 goals and passed for seven assists this past season, leading the Panthers (14-4) to the Class 4A Sunset Region Tournament semifinals. Packer was an All-State selection in her only high school soccer campaign, having previously played exclusively at the elite club level. Rated as the nation's No. 65 recruit in the Class of 2018 by TopDrawerSoccer.com, she recorded eight multi-goal games and scored at least once in all but two games.

Packer has volunteered locally as an elementary school teacher's assistant, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Olivia has such an impact on the field, and her team truly rallied behind her," said Kristina Kasten, head coach of Centennial High. "She is a smart, talented player with great technical ability."

Packer has maintained a weighted 4.54 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play soccer on scholarship at Pepperdine University 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.

Packer joins recent Gatorade Nevada Girls Soccer Players of the Year Arlie Jones (2016-17, Bishop Gorman High School), Taylor Kornieck (2015-16, Coronado High School), Michaela Morris (2014-15, Coronado High School), Sydney Sladek (2013-14, Pahrump Valley High School), Nicole Westover (2012-13, Green Valley High School), Haley Wingender (2011-12, Bishop Gorman High School), Lauren Kaskie (2010-11, Palo Verde High School), McKenzie Karas (2009-10, Arbor View High School), Zakiya Bywaters (2008-09, Rancho High School), and Jenna Riddle (2007-08 & 2006-07, Centennial High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Packer 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 us on Twitter. 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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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