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**MIAMI EAST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OHIO 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 Jonni Parker of Miami East High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year. Parker is the first Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Miami East 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 Parker as Ohio'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, Parker 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-1 senior setter and right-side hitter recorded 449 kills, 315 assists and 153 service aces this past season, leading the Vikings (24-4) to the Division III state quarterfinals. Parker also collected 129 digs and 70 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .567 and a hitting percentage of .467. An American Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-American selection, Parker is a three-time First Team Division III All-State honoree. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,697 kills and 505 service aces.

Parker, who has worn hearing aids since she was four years old, has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach. "Jonni is one of the best players I've ever seen," said Greg Snipes, head coach of Lehman Catholic High. "She can do so many different things and is great at all of them."

Parker has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Penn State University 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.

Parker joins recent Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Players of the Year Shannon Williams (2016-17, Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School), Hunter Atherton (2015-16, Dublin Coffman High School), Margo Wolf (2014-15, Mount Notre Dame High School), Abby Detering (2013-14, Lake Catholic High School), Michelle Strizak (2012-13, Mount Notre Dame High School), Megan Courtney (2011-12, Archbishop Alter High School), Deme Morales (2010-11, Steele High School), Dani Reinert (2009-10, Ursuline Academy), Lauren Whyte (2008-09, Olmsted Falls High School) and Missy Harpenau (2007-08, Mother of Mercy High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Parker 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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