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GATORADE® NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

KHALIA LANIER

Silver Medalist and Pro Beach Volleyball Player April Ross Surprises Standout with Elite Honor

Phoenix, Ariz. (Dec. 9, 2015) - In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Khalia Lanier of Xavier College Prep (Phoenix, Ariz.) as its 2015-16 Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year. Lanier was surprised with the news at school by silver medalist and pro beach volleyball player April Ross.

"I still remember the day when I was honored as the Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year and winning the award is one of the most memorable moments in my career," said Ross. "It's such a rare accomplishment, so I was honored to be able to be a part of today's celebration by surprising Khalia with the award."

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Lanier as the nation's best high school volleyball player. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select her from nearly 430,000 high school volleyball players nationwide. Lanier is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Female High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter recorded 496 kills, 324 digs and 28 service aces while posting a kill percentage of .438 and leading the Gators (34-8) to the Division I state final this past season. A 2015 American Volleyball Coaches Association and Under Armour First Team All-American and the top-ranked player in the nation as rated by PrepVolleyball.com, Lanier was a member of the U.S. Girls' Youth National Volleyball Team, leading some of the country's finest prep players to the 2015 FIVB Girls' U18 World Championship final in Peru last summer.

Lanier has maintained a weighted cumulative GPA of 4.21. She also spent countless hours over nine days in the summer of 2014 working in an orphanage in Komga, South Africa, teaching preschool-aged children. She has also volunteered on behalf of the Desert Mission Food Bank, providing emergency food assistance to help families in North Phoenix.

"Khalia Lanier has been a star on the court since she led the Gators in kills the first match of her freshman year," said John Tawa, managing editor of PrepVolleyball.com. "Physically imposing on attack, she packs a punch few can match and has the intelligence and vision to make opponents pay in myriad ways. Her ability to score combined with a deft passing touch made her the consensus top recruit in the country. She played like it this past fall, fighting through an ankle injury to lead thenationally ranked Gators to the Arizona Division I final. In her four years, Lanier's teams averaged 35 wins per season and won a state title, and she was the principal reason why."

Lanier has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Southern California next fall.

"Khalia embodies everything we look for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient," said Gatorade Chief Marketing Officer Morgan Flatley. "In addition to being one of the best high school volleyball players in the country, Khalia has excelled in the classroom and been a positive influence in her community. She is a role model for younger student-athletes to look up to and we are excited to see all the things she will accomplish in the future."

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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with USA TODAY High School Sports, 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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- 2015 NBA first overall pick Karl-Anthony Towns
- Three-time WNBA champion Maya Moore
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at <http://www.gatorade.com/poy>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

As of December 9, 2015

YEAR	NAME	High School	STATUS
2015-16	Khalia Lanier	Xavier College Prep, Phoenix, AZ	High School Senior
2014-15	Mikaela Foecke	Holy Trinity Catholic, Fort Madison, IA	Univ. of Nebraska
2013-14	Alexa Filley	Assumption, Louisville, KY	Auburn University
2012-13	Lauren Carlini	West Aurora, West Aurora, IL	Univ. of Wisconsin
2011-12	Jordan Burgess	Berkeley Preparatory, Tampa, FL	Stanford University
2010-11	Krista Vansant	Redlands East Valley, Redlands, CA	USA Volleyball
2009-10	Ashley Wittman	Shakopee, Shakopee, MN	Vital Volleyball Club Coach
2008-09	Gina Mancuso	Papillion-La Vista, Papillion, NE	Dresdner SC (Germany)
2007-08	Kelly Murphy	Joliet Catholic Academy, Joliet, IL	USA Volleyball
2006-07	Alix Klineman	Mira Costa, Manhattan Beach, CA	USA Volleyball
2005-06	Megan Hodge	Riverside, Durham, NC	USA Volleyball
2004-05	Cynthia Barboza	Wilson Classical, Long Beach, CA	Retired Pro
2003-04	Cynthia Barboza	Wilson Classical, Long Beach, CA	Retired Pro
2002-03	Kristin Richards	Timpanogos, Orem, UT	USA Volleyball
2001-02	Bre Ladd	Canyon Del Oro, Tucson, AZ	Univ. Of Arizona Grad.
2000-01	Ogonna Nnamani	University, Normal, IL	Retired Pro
1999-00	April Ross	Newport Harbor, Newport Beach, CA	AVP Pro Beach Volleyball
1998-99	Logan Tom	Highland, Salt Lake City, UT	Halkbank Ankara (Turkey)
1997-98	Sara Sandrik	Pelham, Pelham, AL	Stanford Grad.
1996-97	Denise Boylan	Benet Academy, Lisle, IL	Notre Dame Grad.
1995-96	Kerri Walsh	Archbishop Mitty, San Jose, CA	AVP Pro Beach Volleyball

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