

**WALTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 15, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Gabby Gonzales of Walton High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Georgia Volleyball Player of the Year. Gonzales is the third Gatorade Georgia Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Walton 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 Gonzales as Georgia'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, Gonzales joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahler High School, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public High School, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.).

The 6-foot-4 senior outside hitter led the Raiders to a 41-3 record and the Class 7A state championship this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year, Gonzales recorded 539 kills, 237 digs, 34 service aces and 27 blocks. The Class 7A Player of the Year and a 2018-19 Under Armour First Team All-American, she was also named an All-American by PrepVolleyball.com, FloVolleyball and MaxPreps.

A devoted member of her church community, Gonzales has volunteered locally assisting the elderly and coaching youth volleyball players. "Gabby Gonzales is a gifted athlete and a phenomenal player," said Grace Fossier, head coach at Alpharetta High. "She's tall, strong and can hit from anywhere on the court. She'd be a difference-maker for any team."

Gonzales has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Ohio 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.

Two-time winner Gonzales joins Gatorade Georgia Volleyball Players of the Year Gabby Curry (2016-17 & 2015-16, Buford High School), Paige McKnight (2014-15, Dunwoody High School), and Haley Templeton (2013-14, Chattahoochee High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Gonzales has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.