

## **MOUNT MANSFIELD UNION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE VERMONT VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 13, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Syrah Wright of Mount Mansfield Union High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Player of the Year**. Wright is the first Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Mansfield Union 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 Wright as Vermont'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, Wright joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert 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 5-foot-2 junior libero recorded 111 digs, 93 service aces, 42 assists and 22 kills this past season, leading the Cougars (14-4) to the Division 1 state semifinals. Wright moved to Vermont as a sophomore and her teammates voted her as a team captain that year. She is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

Wright was selected to participate in a statewide Student-Athlete Leadership Convention and she has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach. "The difference Syrah made for Mount Mansfield was tremendous," said Tom Schutzius, head coach of Mid Vermont Christian School. "Her serve was probably the best we faced all year and her coverage of the backcourt was ridiculous."

Wright has maintained a 3.11 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Wright joins recent Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Players of the Year Maddie Folsom (2018 – 19, Essex High School) and Charlotte Frivoll (2017-18, Essex High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Wright 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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