

SOUTH ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALASKA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ellie Kleven of South Anchorage High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Alaska Volleyball Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Kleven as Alaska's best high school volleyball player, and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Kerri Walsh Jennings (1995-96, Archbishop Mitty High School, CA), April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, CA) and Campbell Flynn (2024-25, Mercy High School, MI).

The 5-foot-8 senior setter compiled a state-leading 1,196 assists while anchoring the Wolverines' run to a 41-5-1 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament this past season. Kleven also recorded 434 digs, 121 service aces and 97 kills to earn First Team All-Cook Inlet Conference honors. She received American Volleyball Coaches Association Honorable Mention All-American honors and was named First Team All-State.

Kleven has volunteered locally with Western Alaska Typhoon Relief, organizing a food and clothing drive for families displaced by the October 2025 storm. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through the South Anchorage High School chapter of the National Honor Society, including leading a sock drive for the needy, arranging flowers for residents of a senior center and making toys for cats at an animal shelter. "Ellie is a terrific setter—a true setter—which our state has had very few of," said Katie Oxspring, Wasilla High School head coach. "She runs the court, and their team has been at the top for the last four years in large part due to Ellie."

Kleven has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://www.x.com/Gatorade).

###