

XAVIER PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Tessa Larkin of Xavier Preparatory School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Arizona 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 Larkin as Arizona'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 6-foot-2 junior outside hitter led the Gators to a 35-2 record and the Conference 6A state championship this past season. Larkin compiled 419 kills and 248 digs, including 19 kills and nine digs to earn match MVP honors in Xavier Preparatory School's 3-0 win over Corona del Sol High School in the state final. Larkin also recorded 71 blocks and 39 service aces while posting a .484 kill percentage and a .312 hitting percentage. Ranked as the nation's No. 5 recruit in the Class of 2027 by PrepVolleyball.com, she concluded her junior year with 1,162 kills and 780 digs in her prep volleyball career.

Larkin has volunteered locally with her school's St. Vincent de Paul canned food drive and she has donated her time as a youth volleyball coach. "Tessa is one of the most dominant athletes in the state," said Lamar-Renee Bryant, head coach of Xavier Preparatory School. "Her athletic ability is matched only by her relentless work ethic, competitive drive and ability to elevate the play of her teammates."

Larkin has maintained a 4.0 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 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).

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