

MOT CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE DELAWARE VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Lia Henderson of MOT Charter High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Delaware 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 Henderson as Delaware'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-11 senior outside hitter recorded 305 kills on the strength of a .322 hitting percentage this past season, leading the Mustangs to a 13-5 record and a berth in the state quarterfinals. Henderson also compiled 312 digs and 31 service aces to earn First Team All-State honors. The Diamond State Conference co-Player of the Year, she also was named to the Delaware News Journal's All-State First Team.

Henderson has volunteered locally at the Kumon Learning Center, tutoring students from ages four to fourteen in reading and math. She has also donated her time as part of multiple community service initiatives through Jack and Jill of America Inc. and as a bell-ringer for the Salvation Army each December. "When I look at on-court IQ, leadership and impact on her team, Lia Henderson stands out," said Caley Lumpkin, Middletown High School head coach. "She consistently encourages her team on the court after every point. She's the go-to player during critical moments in a match. She can play any position on the court and is a force in the front and back row."

Henderson has maintained a 4.22 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play volleyball at Lehigh University 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.

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