

IOLANI SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE HAWAII VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Taimane Ainu'u of Iolani School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Hawaii 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 Ainu'u as Hawaii'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 sophomore setter and right-side hitter compiled 270 kills to go with a .333 hitting percentage this past season, leading the Raiders (25-7) to the Division 1 state championship. Ainu'u also recorded 168 digs, 140 assists, 42 blocks and 35 service aces. A member of Team USA at the 2025 NORCECA Girls U19 Pan American Cup, Ainu'u was named the tournament's Best Setter, sparking her team to a gold medal.

Ainu'u has volunteered locally as a coach of the 12U team at the Ka Ulukoa volleyball club. She has also donated her time as a race assistant for a marathon and as a coach at youth clinics. "Taimane's high-level experience allows her to play fast with a high volleyball IQ," said Iolani School coach Kainoa Obrey. "As a young player on a young team, Taimane was dependable for us, in and out of system. She was a consistent point producer and played her role with poise and confidence."

Ainu'u has maintained a 3.2 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

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