

JACKSON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSISSIPPI VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Carson Caraway of Jackson Academy is the 2025-26 Gatorade Mississippi 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 Caraway as Mississippi'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 amassed 625 kills and 343 digs this past season, leading the Raiders (32-9-1) to the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools Division I tournament championship match. Caraway also recorded 84 service aces and 54 blocks while posting a .594 kill percentage and a .474 hitting percentage. An American Volleyball Coaches Association Third Team All-American selection, she was also the 2025 PrepDig.com Mississippi Breakout Player of the Year. She concluded her junior year with 1,836 kills and 1,056 digs in her prep volleyball career.

Winner of the 2025 Jackson Academy Art Appreciation Award, Caraway is a member of her school's National Honor Society and French Honor Society. She has volunteered locally with the Jackson Academy Interact Club and as a middle school tutor. She has also donated her time at school for children with disabilities and as a youth volleyball coach. "Carson was a threat the entire game," said Kelsa Walker, head coach of Brandon High School. "Her back-row attack is just as deadly if not more than her front-row attack. She's able to run so many things from the front row that you really have to be disciplined defensively."

Caraway has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play volleyball at Loyola Marymount University in California beginning in the fall of 2027.

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, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X (Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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