

OLD BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW JERSEY VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ashley Markle of Old Bridge High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade New Jersey 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 Markle as New Jersey'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-10 junior outside hitter led the Knights (33-1) to the Group 4 state title this past season, blasting 405 kills for an average of 5.8 per set with a .416 hitting percentage. Markle added 98 aces and 157 digs to earn First Team All-State honors for a second time. She was named the NJ.com MVP of the state semifinals after recording 24 kills, then put down 29 in the state title game to earn that same honor from Big10 Sports. A member of the USAV National Team Beach Volleyball Development Program, she concluded her junior season with 985 kills, 424 digs and 588 service points in her prep career.

Markle has been a longtime volunteer on behalf of Play Unified, which pairs youth athletes with intellectually challenged peers in celebration of sport. She is also a member of her school's Hope Squad, which raises awareness for youth mental health issues, and she's donated her time to the P1440 Fab50 Volunteer Initiative, through which she served at the Ronald McDonald House, the Cincinnati Women's Shelter, Matthew 25 Ministries and Children's Hospital in New Orleans. "After coaching against her and watching tons of film, Markle would 100-percent my vote for POY," said Eddie Rossiter, a Williamstown High School assistant coach. "No one can do what she does. She hits the sharpest angles with power or can hit a 5-foot line cut shot. She could not be stopped this year offensively and was the hardest player to scout, but what separates her from everyone is her defense and passing."

Markle has maintained a 4.1 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play beach volleyball at Florida State University 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.

###