

## **WESTERLY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Lyla Auth of Westerly High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Rhode Island 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 Auth as Rhode Island'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-1 senior outside hitter, setter and middle hitter compiled 268 kills to go with a .401 hitting percentage this past season, leading the Bulldogs (21-0) to the Division 2 state championship. Auth also recorded 256 assists, 151 digs and 41 service aces. She was named the Rhode Island High School Volleyball Coaches Association Division 2 Player of the Year for a second straight season and received First Team All-State honors.

A member of the Westerly chapter of the National Honor Society, Auth has volunteered locally as a mentor to elementary school students and as a tee-ball coach for the Westerly Girls Softball League. She has also donated her time to organizing a fundraiser that raised \$6,000 for the Westerly Hospital Foundation. "Westerly was dominant in Division 2 and Lyla was the focal point of the team," said Tom Ferri, head coach at Cranston West High School. "She was the best hitter we faced all year—in D1 and D2—and she set from the back row, and did it very well."

Auth has maintained a weighted 4.75 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Auth inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for her to enroll at Manhattan University, where she will play volleyball. She graduated from high school in December and will attend classes in the spring semester.

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](https://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://x.com/Gatorade).

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