

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

**CHICAGO** (January 13, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Lakin Laurendine** of **Jackson Academy** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year**. Laurendine is the third Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jackson Academy.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the court, distinguishes Laurendine as Mississippi's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Laurendine joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Lexi Sun (2016-17, Santa Fe Christian School, Calif.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.), Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.) and April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, Calif.).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter led the Raiders to a 40-5 record and the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools Division I tournament championship this past season. Laurendine amassed 623 kills and 526 digs, including a 20-kill, 19-dig effort in Jackson Academy's 3-0 win over Madison-Ridgeland Academy in the state final. She also tallied 97 service aces and 35 blocks, posting a .573 kill percentage and a .468 hitting percentage on the attack. A First Team All-American selection by both MaxPreps and the American Volleyball Coaches Association, she concluded her prep volleyball career with a state-record 2,712 kills.

A devoted member of her church youth group, Laurendine has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Christmas Child, the Salvation Army and youth volleyball programs in addition to donating her time to food and coat donation drives. "Lakin was a dangerous and impactful player on the court," said Christina Daigle, head coach of Ocean Springs High School. "She stands out as an immediate threat. Her physicality is clearly superior on the court, but I've always been equally impressed with her emotional composure. She carries a lot of pressure in every game. Every opponent is coming for her, but she stays focused and composed on the court."

Laurendine has maintained a weighted 3.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Auburn University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. 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 state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Laurendine joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Players of the Year Parker Bracken (2020-21 & 2019-20, Jackson Academy) and Callie Minshew (2018-19, Brandon High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).