

**LAKEVILLE SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE
NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF
THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 9, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kaelyn Bjorklund of Lakeville South High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Minnesota 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 Bjorklund as Minnesota'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 junior setter and right-side hitter amassed 964 assists for an average of 10.1 per set this past season, leading the Cougars (31-3) to the Class 4A state title. She also recorded 244 digs and 118 kills to go with a .304 hitting percentage, adding 55 blocks and 41 aces. Ranked as the nation's No. 57 recruit in her class by PrepDig and a VBRecruiter Junior of the Year finalist, she was an AVCA Second Team All-American selection.

Bjorklund has volunteered locally on behalf of Unified Physical Education, which pairs youth athletes with intellectually challenged peers in celebration of sport. She has also donated her time as a youth volleyball coach. "If I were picking from this year's best players, I'd definitely be starting Bjorklund," said Hannah Spektor, head coach at Apple Valley High School. "She is a talented setter, she's offensive at the net and she has great location as a hitter. She owns a great serve and plays gritty defense. Her consistency and competitive spirit leads her team and she helps all her hitters be offensively dominant."

Bjorklund has maintained a 3.54 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play volleyball at Clemson 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.

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