

**JOEL BARLOW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE CONNECTICUT VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 15, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kiara Robichaud of Joel Barlow High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year. Robichaud is the first Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Joel Barlow High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Robichaud as Connecticut'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, Robichaud joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahlert High School, Iowa), Alisha Glass (2005-06, Leland Public High School, Mich.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.) and Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.).

The 5-foot-11 senior outside hitter led the Falcons to a 25-1 record and the Class L state championship this past season. Robichaud recorded 529 kills, 253 digs, 57 service aces and 23 blocks. The MVP of the state tournament, she was also a First Team All-State selection and a three-time All-South West Conference honoree.

Also a talented violinist, Robichaud has served as a peer tutor and has volunteered locally on behalf of Paws for a Cause. "Kiara Robichaud has the complete package," said Nelson Kwok, head coach at Masuk High. "She's a six-rotation player who passes well, makes quick transitions and hits over the block, from different angles."

Robichaud has maintained a weighted 4.40 GPA in the classroom. She remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Robichaud joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Players of the Year Alana Hruska (2017-18 & 2016-17, RHAM High School), Gabriela Vazquez (2015-16, Platt High School), Izzy Taylor (2014-15, Darien High School), and Sarah Veilleux (2013-14, RHAM High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Robichaud has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

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