

## **EAGAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 Kennedy Orr of Eagan High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Player of the Year. Orr is the third Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Eagan 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 Orr as Minnesota'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, Orr joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahler 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 6-foot sophomore setter and outside hitter amassed 411 assists, 380 kills and 230 digs this past season, leading the Wildcats (29-3) to the Class AAA state championship match. Orr also recorded 68 blocks and 38 service aces, posting a kill percentage of .471 and a hitting percentage of .341. A member of the 2018 USA Volleyball Youth National Team that won the NORCECA Continental Championships in Honduras last summer, she concluded her sophomore year with 1,600 assists and 813 kills in her prep volleyball career.

Orr has volunteered locally with the Eagan High Interact Club and as a youth volleyball coach. "Kennedi did everything that her team needed her to do," said Traci Gussing, head coach of Willmar High School. "When we played them, she carried the team whenever the game got close."

Orr has maintained a 3.47 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska beginning in the fall of 2021.

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.

Orr joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Players of the Year McKenna Melville (2017-18, Eagan High School), Sydney Hilley (2016-17 & 2015-16, Champlin Park High School), Samantha Seliger Swenson (2014-15, Hopkins High School), and Taylr McNeil (2013-14, Eagan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Orr 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).