

**GREEN HOPE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 15, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Sydney Dowler of Green Hope High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year. Dowler is the first Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Green Hope 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 Dowler as North Carolina'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, Dowler 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 junior setter led the Falcons to a 28-1 record and a third-straight Class 4A state championship this past season. Dowler amassed 862 assists to go with 139 digs, 121 kills and 59 service aces, posting a kill percentage of .511 and a hitting percentage of .363. A three-time State Championship Game MVP and the 2018 Tri 6 Conference Player of the Year, she concluded her junior year with 2,478 assists and 475 digs in her prep volleyball career.

Dowler has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth volleyball coach. "Sydney is the best high school setter that I've had to compete against in 15 years of coaching North Carolina high school volleyball," said Erin Hensler, head coach of Leesville Road High. "She can distribute the ball to anyone with precision and accuracy from anywhere on the court."

Dowler has maintained a weighted 3.66 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Maryland beginning in the fall of 2020.

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.

Dowler joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Volleyball Players of the Year Taylor Rowland (2017-18 & 2016-17 Cox Mill High School), Julia Scoles (2015-16, South Iredell High School), Katharine Franz (2014-15, Charlotte Country Day School), and Darian Mack (2013-14, Wakefield High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Dowler 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.