

JONESBORO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 13, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Clara Parker of Jonesboro High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year**. Parker is the third Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jonesboro 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 Parker as Arkansas' best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Parker 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior outside hitter led the Hurricane to a 35-0 record and a second-straight Class 5A state championship this past season. Parker compiled 432 kills with a .450 kill percentage along with 344 digs, 44 blocks and 40 service aces. The two-time Arkansas Preps Player of the Year, Parker was the Class 5A state tournament MVP for a second straight year. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,450 kills and 1,209 digs.

A three-time state doubles champion as a member of the Jonesboro High girls tennis team, which also plays in the fall, Parker serves on the Jonesboro High student council. She has volunteered locally as part of community-beautification projects and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through the Junior Auxiliary of Jonesboro. "Clara is a playmaker—she can hit anything, anywhere," said Lisa Beasley, head coach of Marion High. "She's a threat from anywhere on the floor. Clara can place the ball and put it where a high school kid just shouldn't be able to."

Parker has maintained a weighted 4.24 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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 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.

Two-time winner Parker joins Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Players of the Year Haley Warner (2017-18 & 2014-15, Fayetteville High School), Ella May Powell (2016-17 & 2015-16, Fayetteville High School), and Drew Jones (2013-14, SouthHigh Schoolide High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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