

MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 **Mia Tuaniga of Mater Dei High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade California Volleyball Player of the Year**. Tuaniga is the third Gatorade California Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mater Dei 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 Tuaniga as California'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, Tuaniga 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-9 senior setter compiled 721 assists, 256 digs, 205 kills, 54 blocks and 41 service aces this past season, leading the Monarchs (30-6) to the Open Division semifinals and a No. 7 national ranking as rated by PrepVolleyball.com. A member of the U.S. Women's Junior National Team, Tuaniga was also the Orange County Player of the Year, a 2019-20 Under Armour First Team All-American and a MaxPreps First Team All-American.

Tuaniga has volunteered locally on behalf of the Orange County Buddy Walk and youth volleyball programs. "Mia Tuaniga is a very impressive player," said Ron Kordes, head coach at national power Assumption (Ky.) High. "She's very athletic, she has a phenomenal serve and she is so strong. She's able to put up settable balls from just about anywhere and she really has command of the court."

Tuaniga has maintained a 3.23 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Long Beach State University 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.

Tuaniga joins recent Gatorade California Volleyball Players of the Year Natalie Berty (2018 – 19, Mater Dei High School), Devon Chang (2017-18, Santa Margarita Catholic High School), Lexi Sun (2016-17, Santa Fe Christian School), Kathryn Plummer (2015-16, Aliso Niguel High School), Yaasmeen Bedart-Ghani (2014-15, Redondo Union High School), and Taylor Nelson (2013-14, Granite Bay High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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