

## **CAPITAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MONTANA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 13, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Paige Bartsch of Capital High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Montana Volleyball Player of the Year**. Bartsch is the second Gatorade Montana Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Capital 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 Bartsch as Montana'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, Bartsch 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 6-foot-3 junior middle blocker led the Bruins to a 33-0 record and a second-straight Class AA state championship this past season. Bartsch compiled 293 kills, 127 digs, 90 service aces and 86 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .535 and a hitting percentage of .369. The Western Conference Class AA Player of the Year, Bartsch is a two-time First Team All-State selection. She concluded her junior year with 542 kills in her prep volleyball career.

Bartsch has volunteered with her local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and as a youth volleyball coach. "Paige is a very smart and strong player," said Monica Grimsrud, head coach of Billings West High School. "She is not one that could be shut down. Most other players have tendencies that if you take them away, they struggle. She doesn't have that."

Bartsch has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at Boise State University 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.

Bartsch joins recent Gatorade Montana Volleyball Players of the Year Audrey Hofer (2018 – 19, Capital High School), Raegan Steiner (2017-18, Billings Senior High School), Elsa Godwin (2016-17, Sentinel High School), Caitlin Lonergan (2015-16, Bozeman High School), Taylor Mims (2014-15, Billings Senior High School), and Jace Henderson (2013-14, Billings Senior High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Bartsch 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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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