

**OSSINING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Mychael Vernon of Ossining High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade New York Volleyball Player of the Year**. Vernon is the first Gatorade New York Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ossining 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 Vernon as New York'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, Vernon 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-11 senior outside hitter blasted 719 kills to go with 279 digs, 60 service aces and 48 blocks this past season, leading the Pride (37-8-2) to the Class AA final four. A First Team All-State honoree, Vernon was selected as the Section 1 and the Journal News/lohud Westchester/Putnam Player of the Year, and was also named a 2019-20 Under Armour First Team All-American.

Vernon has raised funds to benefit both pediatric and breast cancer awareness efforts, and has volunteered locally on behalf of food pantries, youth volleyball programs and Richmond Community Services. "Mychael Vernon is one of the hardest-hitting players I've seen in my 27 years coaching," said David Ponterio, head coach at Ardsley High. "She's just an outstanding all-around player. She rarely makes mistakes on serve receive and she kills most, if not all, balls that are set to her in the front row."

Vernon has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Oregon 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.

Vernon joins recent Gatorade New York Volleyball Players of the Year Beth Miller (2018 – 19, Portville High School), Mackenzie Cole (2017-18, Connetquot High School), Yvette Burcescu (2016-17, Walter Panas High School), Sam Burgio (2015-16, Eden High School), Leah Meyer (2014-15, St. Mary's High School), and Luisa Schirmer (2013-14, Pittsford Sutherland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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