

**GUILFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 6, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Emma Appleman of Guilford High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year. Appleman is the first Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Guilford 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 Appleman as Connecticut's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Appleman 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-10 senior outside hitter recorded 217 kills, 93 digs and 32 service aces this past season, leading the Grizzlies to a 14-0 record. The GameTimeCT Player of the Year, Appleman is also a First Team All-State honoree and the Southern Connecticut Conference Player of the Year.

Appleman has donated her time delivering groceries to quarantined and home-bound members of the community and has volunteered on behalf of youth basketball and volleyball programs. "Emma Appleman is a tremendous volleyball player," said Kathryn Coldren, head coach at West Haven High. "Her skill level is far beyond anything that I've seen in many years in Connecticut. I've watched her get better and smarter every single season."

Appleman has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the College of Charleston 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Appleman joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Volleyball Players of the Year Paula Hernandez (2019-20, Woodstock Academy), Kiara Robichaud (2018-19, Joel Barlow High School), and Alana Hruska (2017-18 & 2016-17, RHAM High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Appleman has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Appleman is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###