

**ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 6, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of **honoring** the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Rachel Richardson of St. John's College High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade District of Columbia Volleyball Player of the Year. Richardson is the seventh Gatorade District of Columbia Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. John's College 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 Richardson as District of Columbia'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, Richardson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kayla Banwarth (2006-07, Wahler 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-9 senior outside hitter was a three-time All-Washington Catholic Athletic Conference First Team selection and the 2019 WCAC Player of the Year. Richardson was also a 2019 Washington Post First Team All-Met honoree and a 2020 American Volleyball Coaches Association Honorable Mention All-American. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,398 kills and 747 digs.

Richardson has volunteered locally with the children's youth ministry at her church and at a senior citizens home, and she has donated her time on behalf of multiple animal shelters. "Rachel has been gifted with tremendous athletic ability but it's her court awareness and IQ that is special," said Bill Pribac, head coach of St. John's High. "She very rarely is in the wrong place against opposing hitters whether she is front row or back row, and she knows how to hit around a block."

Richardson has maintained a weighted 4.46 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Duke University beginning 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.

Two-time winner Richardson joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Volleyball Players of the Year Lauren Antonucci (2018-19, St. John's College High School), and Rebecca Frye (2017-18 & 2016-17, St. John's College High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Richardson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Richardson 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

###