

**ARUNDEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 Brooke Watts of Arundel High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Maryland Volleyball Player of the Year. Watts is the first Gatorade Maryland Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Arundel 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 Watts as Maryland'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, Watts 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 outside hitter recorded 76 kills, 31 digs and five service aces, leading the Wildcats to a 5-0 record during a pandemic-shortened season. Watts led Arundel to the program's first-ever Class 4A state championship as a junior, amassing a school-record 324 kills. She was named the Capital Gazette Player of the Year and was also selected to the Baltimore Sun All-Metro First Team.

Watts has volunteered locally as part of her school's Athletic Leadership Council as well as on behalf of anti-racism initiatives. "Brooke Watts is a game-changer," said Tim Dunbar, head coach at Severna Park High. "She's strong, overpowering and consistent. She's one of those players who affects the game plan of the opponent because you have to account for her at all times."

Watts has maintained a 3.44 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Murray 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 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.

Watts joins recent Gatorade Maryland Volleyball Players of the Year Mary Grace Goyena (2019-20, Mount de Sales Academy), and Jenaisya Moore (2018-19, 2017-18 & 2016-17, Northwest High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Watts has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Watts 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).

###