

**JACKSON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Parker Bracken of Jackson Academy as its 2020-21 Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year. Bracken is the second Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jackson Academy.

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 Bracken as Mississippi'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, Bracken 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 led the Raiders to a 29-4 record and the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools championship this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Volleyball Player of the Year, Bracken amassed 473 kills, 330 digs, 107 service aces and 33 blocks, while posting a hitting percentage of .464. A Clarion Ledger First Team All-State selection and the MAIS Player of the Year, she was named a MaxPreps First Team All-American and a 2020-21 Under Armour Honorable Mention All-American.

Bracken has served as a mentor for elementary school students and has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Christmas Child and youth volleyball programs. "We've never been able to find a way to stop Parker Bracken," said Shelby Grace Mayes, head coach at Jackson Prep. "She shows up every match with her 'A' game. She's always a threat and she never has an off day."

Bracken has maintained a 3.84 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play beach volleyball on scholarship at Louisiana 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.

Two-time winner Bracken joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Players of the Year Callie Minshew (2018-19 & 2017-18, Brandon High School), and Emma Funk (2016-17, Our Lady Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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