

**BISHOP KELLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Audrey Buford of Bishop Kelley High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Oklahoma Volleyball Player of the Year. Buford is the seventh Gatorade Oklahoma Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Kelley 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 Buford as Oklahoma’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, Buford 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 5-foot-9 senior setter and right-side hitter led the Comets to a 34-3 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Buford compiled 617 assists, 316 digs, 307 kills, 66 service aces and 37 blocks while posting a .429 kill percentage. The 2020 Oklahoman Player of the Year and the State Tournament MVP, she concluded her prep volleyball career with 2,717 assists, 1,147 digs and 846 kills.

Buford has volunteered locally as a member of the Link Crew at Bishop Kelley High, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her school. “Audrey is a great competitor and a very strong leader for her team,” said Will Ethridge, head coach of Edmond Santa Fe High. “She is a do-it-all player. She’s the type of kid you want with the ball in her hands when the game is on the line.”

Buford has maintained a weighted 4.04 GPA in the classroom. She will attend the University of Oklahoma 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.

Buford joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Volleyball Players of the Year Kamryn Bacus (2019-20, Edmond North High School), Olivia Curtis (2018-19 & 2017-18, Christian Heritage Academy), and Alli Evans (2016-17, Edmond Memorial High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

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