

**NORTH ALLEGHENY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Paige Morningstar of North Allegheny High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Player of the Year. Morningstar is the third Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Allegheny 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 Morningstar as Pennsylvania’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, Morningstar 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 6-foot senior setter led the Tigers to an 18-0 record and their fourth straight Class 4A state championship this past season. Morningstar amassed 715 assists, 97 digs, 91 kills, 41 blocks and 30 service aces. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Player of the Year, she was also a three-time First Team All-State honoree.

Also a basketball standout, Morningstar has raised funds to benefit the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. “Paige Morningstar is a next-level talent,” said Andrew Oree, head coach at Hempfield High. “Her ability to turn bad plays into good ones really sets her apart. She’s a force at the net as a blocker, she’s an offensive threat and she’s good defensively too.”

Morningstar has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Louisville 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.

Morningstar joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Volleyball Players of the Year Macy Van Den Elzen (2019-20, Emmaus High School), Abby Miller (2018-19, North Allegheny Senior High School), Renee Schultz (2017-18, Bishop Shanahan High School), and Sam Graver (2016-17, Parkland High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

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