

**SEVEN LAKES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Ally Batenhorst of Seven Lakes High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year. Batenhorst is the first Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Seven Lakes 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 Batenhorst as Texas'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, Batenhorst 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-4 senior outside hitter led the Spartans to a 25-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Batenhorst amassed 574 kills, 371 digs, 33 blocks and 32 service aces. The Class 6A Player of the Year and the Greater Houston Player of the Year, she was MVP of the state tournament. Batenhorst was named a 2020-21 Under Armour First Team All-American, a VolleyballMag.com First Team All-American and a MaxPreps First Team All-American.

Batenhorst has served as a peer mentor in addition to volunteering locally on behalf of hurricane relief efforts and the Ballard House, which provides temporary lodging for individuals and their families who are hospitalized or receiving treatment. "Ally Batenhorst is legitimately the best high school volleyball player I have ever seen," said Allison Merrell, head coach at Tompkins High School. "She is unreal. She refined her craft this year and somehow improved her ball control, which was already really, really good."

Batenhorst has maintained a weighted 4.11 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Batenhorst joins recent Gatorade Texas Volleyball Players of the Year Paige Flickinger (2019-20 & 2018-19, Byron Nelson High School), Adanna Rollins (2017-18, Hebron High School), and Kylee McLaughlin (2016-17, Hebron High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

###