

**HEDGESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Skylar Yates of Hedgesville High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade West Virginia Volleyball Player of the Year. Yates is the second Gatorade West Virginia Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hedgesville 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 Yates as West Virginia'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, Yates 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 junior outside hitter amassed 513 kills, 321 digs, 44 service aces and 39 blocks this past season, leading the Eagles to the Class AAA semifinals. A First Team All-State selection, Yates posted a highly efficient hitting percentage of .374. She was named the Eastern Panhandle Conference Player of the Year.

A devoted member of her church youth group, Yates has served as a tutor for younger students and has volunteered locally on behalf of food donation drives and youth volleyball programs. "Skylar Yates is the best all-around player in the state," said Erin Thorpe, head coach at Parkersburg High School. "She can single-handedly beat teams, and she's a great leader for a young team too."

Yates has maintained a weighted 4.56 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Yates joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Volleyball Players of the Year Skye Stokes (2019-20, Oak Glen High School), Bryce Knapp (2018-19, Woodrow Wilson High School), and Tessa Wyner (2017-18 & 2016-17, George Washington High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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