

**HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 11, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Jordan Middleton** of **Hamilton High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year**. Middleton is the first Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hamilton 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 court, distinguishes Middleton as Arizona's best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Middleton joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2 senior outside hitter led the Huskies to a 34-5 record and a second-straight Conference 6A state championship this past season. Middleton compiled 516 kills with a .487 kill percentage and a .342 hitting percentage, including 25 kills in a four-set win over O'Connor High in the state final. One of two high school athletes on the USA Volleyball Under-20 Women's National Team, Middleton was a 2021 American Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-American selection. She concluded her prep volleyball career with a school-record 1,556 kills.

Middleton has donated her time to the Friends for Life Animal Rescue and Kitty City at Wild Horse Ranch. She has also volunteered locally as part of fundraisers to benefit the American Nurses Foundation, the Harvey Milk Foundation and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center. "Jordan has improved her ball control tremendously, and offensively she is very hard to defend," said Ben Maxfield, head coach of Corona del Sol High School. "She has done a nice job learning when to hit the ball hard and when to just keep it in play."

Middleton has maintained a weighted 3.75 in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Southern California 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Middleton joins recent Gatorade Arizona Volleyball Players of the Year Jaelyn Hodge (2019-20, Basha High School), Shannon Shields (2018-19, Xavier College Preparatory High School), and Brooke Nuneviller (2017-18, Corona del Sol High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Middleton has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Middleton is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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