

**FAYETTEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS 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 **Kennedy Phelan** of **Fayetteville High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year**. Phelan is the third Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fayetteville 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 Phelan as Arkansas' best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Phelan 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 5-foot-8 junior setter led the Bulldogs to a 32-4 record and a second-straight Class 6A state championship this past season. Phelan amassed 1,123 assists in addition to compiling 274 digs, 112 service aces, 88 kills and 31 blocks, including 41 assists and 14 digs in a three-set sweep of Har-Ber High in the state final. A three-time Class 6A First Team All-State selection, Phelan was the 2021 6A state tournament MVP and the All-Arkansas Preps Player of the Year. She concluded her junior year with 2,995 assists in her prep volleyball career.

Phelan has volunteered locally with special education students at Fayetteville High School, and she has donated her time at Potter's House of Northwest Arkansas, which empowers the needy. "Kennedy is a total package threat," said Natalie Throneberry, head coach of Southside High School. "The service line, back-row defense, setting accuracy, and—her biggest area of growth—on the front row, with better blocking and an ability to dump really coming on this season. With a game on the line, I'd want the ball in Kennedy's hands."

Phelan has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at Florida State University beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Phelan joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Volleyball Players of the Year Hannah Hogue (2020-21, Southside High School), Clara Parker (2019-20 & 2018-19, Jonesboro High School), and Haley Warner (2017-18, Fayetteville 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, Phelan 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. Phelan 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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