

**CARDINAL MOONEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA 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 **Jordyn Byrd** of **Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year**. Byrd is the first Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cardinal Mooney Catholic 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 Byrd as Florida'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, Byrd 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 6-foot-5 junior outside hitter amassed 551 kills to go with 258 digs, 56 blocks and 25 service aces this past season, leading the Cougars (20-8) to the Class 3A state tournament this past season. Byrd also recorded a .463 hitting percentage. A MaxPreps Second Team All-American, she is ranked as the nation's No. 22 prospect in the Class of 2023 by PrepVolleyball.com.

Also a basketball standout, Byrd has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Jordyn Byrd is a freak athlete and the most dominant player in the state," said Chad Mercado, head coach at Carrollwood Day School. "She's the only player we faced who we had to say, 'we just gotta hope for the best.' She's a talented and exciting player."

Byrd has maintained a 3.70 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Byrd joins recent Gatorade Florida Volleyball Players of the Year Paris Thompson (2020-21, Fort Myers High School), Annie Cate Fitzpatrick (2019-20, Trinity Catholic High School), Savannah Vach (2018-19, Oviedo High School), and Marlie Monserez (2017-18, Bishop Moore Catholic 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, Byrd 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. Byrd 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.