

**PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 **Kora Ruff** of **Pleasant Valley High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Iowa Volleyball Player of the Year**. Ruff is the first Gatorade Iowa Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pleasant Valley 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 Ruff as Iowa'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, Ruff 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 senior setter led the Spartans to a 33-4 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Ruff amassed 950 assists to go with 250 digs, 85 kills, 41 blocks and 31 service aces. A Second Team Under Armour All-American, she was the Iowa Girls Coaches Association Class 5A Player of the Year, the Mississippi Athletic Conference Player of the Year and an Elite All-State Team honoree.

Also a track standout, Ruff has served as a tutor for younger students and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Ruff made the biggest difference on the court of any single player that we faced this year," said Jessica Rinehart, head coach at Ankeny Centennial High School. "She ran the show, had good composure and was really hard for blockers to read. She just makes good things happen."

Ruff has maintained a 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Evansville 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.

Ruff joins recent Gatorade Iowa Volleyball Players of the Year Phyona Schrader (2020-21, Ankeny High School), Akacia Brown (2019-20, Cedar Falls High School), and Madi Kubik (2018-19 & 2017-18, Valley 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, Ruff 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. Ruff 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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