

**ST. MARY'S DOMINICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE LOUISIANA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 11, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kate Baker** of **St. Mary's Dominican High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Louisiana Volleyball Player of the Year**. Baker is the first Gatorade Louisiana Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Mary's Dominican 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 Baker as Louisiana'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, Baker 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 5-foot-8 senior setter led St. Mary's to a 48-2 record and the Division I state championship this past season. Baker amassed 1,232 assists along with 401 digs, 202 kills, 70 service aces and 42 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .470 and a hitting percentage of .379. A two-time Division I state tournament MVP, Baker is also a two-time Division I Player of the Year and a 2021 American Volleyball Coaches Association Second Team All-American selection. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 3,973 assists, 1,565 digs and 842 kills.

A member of the Mu Alpha Theta mathematics society as well as the National English and National Art honor societies, Baker has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit the Henry Aucion Foundation, which supports pediatric heart patients and their families. "Kate is so dangerous from everywhere on the court," said Kasey Laird-Dennies, head coach of Cabrini High School. "She also understands the game mentally at such a high level, it really distinguishes her from the competition."

Baker has maintained a weighted 4.36 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play beach volleyball on scholarship at Louisiana State University 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 Baker joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Volleyball Players of the Year Cicily Hidalgo (2019-20, Teurlings Catholic High School), and Ellie Holzman (2018-19 & 2017-18, Mount Carmel Academy), 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, Baker 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. Baker 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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