

**WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Stella Swenson** of **Wayzata High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Player of the Year**. Swenson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wayzata 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 Swenson as Minnesota'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, Swenson 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-1 sophomore setter led the Trojans to a 34-0 record and the Class AAAA state title this past season. Swenson amassed 936 assists along with 145 digs, 93 kills, 58 service aces and 57 blocks, contributing 55 assists, 10 digs and five kills in Wayzata's 3-1 win over East Ridge High in the state final. A two-time First Team All-State selection and a four-time All-Conference honoree, Swenson is ranked as the nation's No. 28 recruit in the Class of 2024 by PrepVolleyball.com. Her older sister, Samantha, was the state's 2014-15 Gatorade Girls Volleyball Player of the Year.

Swenson has volunteered locally at an assisted-living facility, and she has donated her time as a youth volleyball coach. "Stella makes very good decisions offensively and has a broad set of skills she displays every night in her matches," said Hannah Specktor, head coach of Apple Valley High School. "She is very versatile on the floor as more than just a setter."

Swenson has maintained a B average in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Swenson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Players of the Year Erin Lamb (2020-21, Stewartville High School), Kennedi Orr (2019-20 & 2018-19, Eagan High School), and McKenna Melville (2017-18, Eagan 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, Swenson 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. Swenson 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).

###