

**JACKSON ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Lakin Laurendine** of **Jackson Academy** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year**. Laurendine is the third Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jackson Academy.

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 Laurendine as Mississippi'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, Laurendine 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-2 junior outside hitter led the Raiders to a 38-8 record and the Midsouth Association of Independent Schools championship this past season. Laurendine amassed 509 kills and 378 digs to go with 111 service aces and 46 blocks, posting a .434 hitting percentage. A MaxPreps Second Team All-American, she was named the MAIS Player of the Year.

A devoted member of her church youth group, Laurendine has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Christmas Child, the Salvation Army and youth volleyball programs as well as food and coat donation drives. "Lakin Laurendine is a powerful presence on the court and contributes in multiple aspects of play," said Christina Daigle, head coach at Ocean Springs High School. "Her team is heavily dependent on her, but her performance is consistent and exceptional."

Laurendine has maintained a 3.68 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.

Laurendine joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Volleyball Players of the Year Parker Bracken (2020-21 & 2019-20, Jackson Academy) and Callie Minshew (2018-19 & 2017-18, Brandon 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, Laurendine 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. Laurendine 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.