

**CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Tess Fuqua** of **Centennial High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New Mexico Volleyball Player of the Year**. Fuqua is the first Gatorade New Mexico Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Centennial 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 Fuqua as New Mexico'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, Fuqua 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 junior outside hitter amassed 586 kills and 144 digs this past season, leading the Hawks (23-3) to the Class 5A state semifinals. Fuqua also tallied 49 service aces and 39 blocks while posting a .546 kill percentage and a .415 hitting percentage. The 2021 Class 5A Player of the Year, she is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

An aspiring medical professional, Fuqua participated in a six-week internship at the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine in Las Cruces last summer. She has volunteered locally with Best Buddies International and as an English Language Learners tutor. "Tess has been a dominant player in New Mexico volleyball since she was a freshman and especially in the last two years," said Al Rosen, head coach of Centennial High School. "She has grown not only as a player but as a leader and a captain as well."

Fuqua has maintained a weighted 3.71 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Arizona beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Fuqua joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Volleyball Players of the Year Sidney McIntosh (2020-21, La Cueva High School), Mariana Sharp (2019-20, La Cueva High School), Brie Mortensen (2018-19, La Cueva High School), and Cat Kelly (2017-18, Sandia Preparatory 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, Fuqua 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. Fuqua 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.