

**LOVEJOY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Averi Carlson** of **Lovejoy High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year**. Carlson is the first Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lovejoy 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 Carlson as Texas' best high school volleyball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Volleyball Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Carlson 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 senior setter led the Leopards to a 42-6 record and the Class 5A state championship this past season. Carlson amassed 919 assists and 378 digs along with 212 kills and 72 service aces. A First Team Under Armour All-American, she was the state championship MVP and the Dallas Morning News Player of the Year. Also a MaxPreps First Team All-American, Carlson is a member of the U.S. Women's U20 National Team and is ranked as the nation's No. 3 prospect in the Class of 2022 by PrepVolleyball.com.

Carlson has volunteered on behalf of Grace Bridge regional food bank in Celina, the Samaritan Inn homeless shelter in McKinney and the Special Olympics. An active member of Lovejoy's PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership Skills) program and the Prestonwood Baptist Church community, she has also donated her time as an upperclassman to PAWS, which assists special needs students. "Averi Carlson is the best setter in the nation, and also a humble, selfless player," said Erin Kauffman, head coach at Prosper High School. "This year, she was asked to hit as well and she excelled with that, too. She's the best setter, and all-around player, that I've faced at the high school level."

Carlson has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Baylor 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.

Carlson joins recent Gatorade Texas Volleyball Players of the Year Ally Batenhorst (2020-21, Seven Lakes High School), Paige Flickinger (2019-20 & 2018-19, Byron Nelson High School), and Adanna Rollins (2017-18, Hebron 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, Carlson 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. Carlson 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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