

**HERNDON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Akasha Anderson** of **Herndon High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Virginia Volleyball Player of the Year**. Anderson is the first Gatorade Virginia Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Herndon 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 Anderson as Virginia'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, Anderson 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-3 senior outside hitter amassed 670 kills and 382 digs this past season, leading the Fighting Hornets (18-6) to the Class 6 state championship match. Anderson also recorded 76 service aces and 28 blocks while posting a .486 kill percentage and a .336 hitting percentage. The Region 6D Player of the Year and the Washington Post All-Met Player of the Year, she concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,076 kills and 474 digs.

Anderson has volunteered locally as part of voter registration drives, and she has donated her time at local food pantries. "Akasha was a standout player," said Sheena Eldred, head coach of Yorktown High School. "She puts so much power behind her hits and can really mix up her attacks. She is a great passer and server as well."

Anderson has maintained a 3.70 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at Auburn 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.

Anderson joins recent Gatorade Virginia Volleyball Players of the Year Amanda Lowe (2020-21, Blacksburg High School), Sydney Reed (2019-20, Flint Hill School), Krissy O'Malley (2018-19, Flint Hill School), and Elena Shklyar (2017-18, Langley 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, Anderson 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. Anderson 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).