

**WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 13, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Stella Swenson** of **Wayzata High School** is the **2022-23 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 Lexi Sun (2016-17, Santa Fe Christian School, Calif.), Jordan Larson (2004-05, Logan View High School, Neb.), Foluke Akinradewo (2004-05, St. Thomas High School, Fla.) and April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, Calif.).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1 junior setter led the Trojans to a 30-4 record and a second straight Class 4A state title this past season. Swenson amassed 888 assists, 223 digs, 138 kills, 74 blocks and 49 service aces and posted a .491 kill percentage and a .391 hitting percentage on the attack. A three-time First Team All-State selection and a five-time All-Conference honoree, Swenson is ranked as the No. 5 recruit in the Class of 2024 by PrepDig.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 is a game-changer," said Tammy Cornillez, head coach of St. Michael-Albertville High School. "She knows her teammates well. She knows her opponents even better. She is both offensive in an indirect role as a setter and in a direct role [attacking]."

Swenson has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Minnesota beginning in the fall of 2024.

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.

Two-time winner Swenson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Players of the Year Erin Lamb (2020-21, Stewartville High School) and Kennedi Orr (2019-20 & 2018-19, Eagan High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.