

**PRESTONWOOD CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Macaria Spears** of **Prestonwood Christian Academy** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year**. Spears is the first Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Prestonwood Christian 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 Spears 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, Spears 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 6-foot-3 sophomore outside hitter led the Lions to a 40-1 record and a Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) state championship this past season. Spears amassed 544 kills and 225 digs to go with 50 aces and 65 blocks, posting a .477 hitting percentage and .602 kill percentage on the attack. A member of the under-19 U.S. National Team, she was named TAPPS Player of the Year, the Dallas Morning News Player of the Year, VolleyballMag Texas Player of the Year and a MaxPreps First-Team All-American.

Spears has volunteered locally as part of the Service Project Day at Prestonwood Christian, during which students work at food pantries, retirement facilities and men's and women's shelters, among other locations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She also has donated her time to the Special Olympics event at Flint Hill School in Virginia, Spears' former school, in addition to packing lunches for needy families over the holidays. "She contacts the ball very high and is tough to block, but she's also smart with her placement of the ball— she's strategic with what she does offensively," said Wakeland High School head coach U'iLani Womble. "In the back row, she's a good passer out of serve-receive, and I think the thing that makes her successful is her reading on defense and the ability to cover a lot of court and make successful digs."

Spears, the daughter of former Dallas Cowboys defensive lineman Marcus Spears and former WNBA player Aiysha Spears, has maintained a 3.12 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Spears joins recent Gatorade Texas Volleyball Players of the Year Averil Carlson (2021-22, Lovejoy High School), Ally Batenhorst (2020-21, Seven Lakes High School), Paige Flickinger (2019-20, Byron Nelson High School), and Paige Flickinger (2018-19, Byron Nelson 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.