

**VALOR CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Delaney Russell** of **Valor Christian High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Player of the Year**. Russell is the first Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Valor Christian High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the court, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Russell as Colorado's best high school volleyball player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Harper Murray (2022-23, Skyline High School, Mich.), Kerri Walsh Jennings (1995-96, Archbishop Mitty High School, Calif.) and April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-10 senior outside hitter led the Eagles to a 29-0 record and a second consecutive Class 5A state title this past season. Russell amassed 383 kills, averaging 4.4 per set, and compiled a .395 hitting percentage, helping Valor Christian earn the nation's No. 26 ranking in the MaxPreps Top 50. She also recorded 307 digs and 47 service aces. The 2023 Class 5A CHSAA Player of the Year, she was named a VBallRecruiter National Senior Player of the Year Finalist.

A recipient of the seal of biliteracy in the Spanish language, Russell has volunteered as a shadow on behalf of the nursing department at Denver Health. She has also donated her time to Operation Christmas Child and as a youth volleyball camp coach. "At the state tournament, Delaney Russell was outstanding on the biggest stage against the best competition," said Fossil Ridge head coach Natalie Burton. "She continued to take on the biggest role offensively, along with passing and defense, and was exceptional. Really unstoppable. Like many coaches who played against her, she was our main focus to stop or slow down to have a chance to beat Valor. None of us could."

Russell has maintained a 4.17 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Montana 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.

Russell joins recent Gatorade Colorado Volleyball Players of the Year Izzy Starck (2022-23, Rampart High School), Carter Booth (2021-22, Cherry Creek High School), Anjelina Starck (2020-21, Rampart High School), and Julianna Dalton (2019-20, Chaparral High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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.

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