

**SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 **Anna Richardson** of **Smyrna High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Delaware Volleyball Player of the Year**. Richardson is the first Gatorade Delaware Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Smyrna 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 Richardson as Delaware'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-11 senior outside hitter led the Eagles to a 19-1 record and the first state championship in school history this past season. Richardson recorded 301 kills, averaging 4.49 per set, to go with 226 digs, 23 aces and 11 blocks. She was named the Delaware High School Coaches Association's Player of the Year and is a two-time First Team All-State selection. She had 20 kills in Smyrna's 3-1 win over Ursuline in the state final.

Richardson has volunteered locally on behalf of a toy drive organized in association with Smyrna's athletic department. She has also donated her time with the Special Olympics and as a local youth soccer and volleyball coach. "It was impossible to beat her," said Newark Charter School head coach Jessica Weller. "I truly believe Smyrna won the state championship because of her dominance. Match-in and match-out, the entire state was trying to stop Anna."

Richardson has maintained a 3.8 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has verbally committed to play volleyball at West Chester 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.

Richardson joins recent Gatorade Delaware Volleyball Players of the Year Julia Yurkovich (2022-23, Saint Mark's High School), Brenya Reid (2021-22, Sussex Central High School), Raychel Ehlers (2020-21, Indian River High School), and Savannah Seemans (2019-20, Saint Mark's 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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