

**WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Stella Swenson** of **Wayzata High School** is the **2023-24 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 celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the court, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Swenson as Minnesota’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 6-foot-2 setter led the Trojans (34-0) to the Class AAAA state title this past season, recording 877 assists en route to winning the Minnesota Volleyball Coaches Association Ms. Baden Award as the state’s best player. A three-time Gatorade Player of the Year and four-time All-State selection, Swenson averaged 9.9 assists per set and compiled 215 digs along with 140 kills on the strength of a .399 hitting percentage. Ranked as the nation’s No. 8 recruit in her class by PrepDig, she also had 63 service aces and 53 blocks.

Swenson has volunteered locally at multiple assisted living facilities and maintains active friendships with residents. “Stella Swenson is one of the best setters—if not the best—that I’ve seen in a long time,” said Eagan High School head coach Kathy Gillen. “Her sets are consistently right on target, no matter where she is setting from on the court. Her awareness of the game is years ahead of her time. Honestly, I’m glad she’s finally graduating, we’re tired of playing against her.”

Swenson has maintained a 3.46 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play volleyball on scholarship at the University of Minnesota beginning 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.

Three-time winner Swenson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Volleyball Players of the Year Erin Lamb (2020-21, Stewartville High School) and Kennedi Orr (2019-20, Eagan 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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