

**CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 **Lauren Hurst** of **Cleveland High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Tennessee Volleyball Player of the Year**. Hurst is the first Gatorade Tennessee Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cleveland 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 Hurst as Tennessee'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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-3 junior outside hitter led the Blue Raiders to a 42-8 record and a second-straight Division I, Class AAA state championship this past season. Hurst amassed 773 kills and 309 digs, including 27 kills in Cleveland's 3-0 win over Nolensville High School in the state final. Hurst also compiled 85 assists, 82 service aces and 32 blocks while posting a .470 kill percentage and a .315 hitting percentage. She was a MaxPreps.com Second Team All-American selection for a second straight season and concluded her junior year with 1,929 kills in her prep volleyball career.

Hurst has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball and basketball coach, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Lauren is one of the best players I have coached against in 29 years," said Christie McElhaney, head coach of Bradley Central High School. "She is a true athlete and competitor. No matter the defense you have, she is hard to stop, even from the back row."

Hurst has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Two-time winner Hurst joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Volleyball Players of the Year Devyn Dunn (2021-22, Knoxville Catholic High School) and Shaye Eggleston (2020-21 & 2019-20, Brentwood 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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