

**ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Izzy Nerad** of **Essex High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Player of the Year**. Nerad is the sixth Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Essex 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 Nerad as Vermont'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-1 senior outside hitter led the Hornets (18-0) to their third consecutive Division I state championship this past season. Nerad recorded 133 kills, averaging 3.6 per set, to go with 65 digs and 36 aces. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she was named 2023 Vermont Youth Volleyball Association Offensive Player of the Year.

A member of the National Honor Society, Nerad has volunteered locally on behalf of the YMCA and will complete an electrical and biomedical engineering internship at the University of Vermont this spring. She has also donated her time as a youth volleyball coach. "Izzy is an incredibly talented player who led our team with her skill and hard work," said Essex head coach Jen Liquori. "She was a four-year varsity starter and has been an integral part of our four consecutive state championships."

Nerad has maintained a 4.12 GPA in the classroom. At the time of her selection, she remained undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Nerad joins recent Gatorade Vermont Volleyball Players of the Year Jocelyn Ray (2022-23, Essex High School), Jazmin Munson (2021-22, Essex High School), Molly Ardren (2020-21, Essex High School), and Syrah Wright (2019-20, Mount Mansfield Union 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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