WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE FLORIDA VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 9, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Gigi Artiles** of **Westminster Christian School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year**. Artiles is the first Gatorade Florida Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Westminster Christian School.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their success on the court, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Artiles as Florida's best high school volleyball player, and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as April Ross (1999-00, Newport Harbor High School, Ca.), Kerri Walsh Jennings (1995-96, Archbishop Mitty High School, Ca.) and Ayden Ames (2023-24, Prosper High School, Texas).

The 6-foot-3 junior outside hitter led the Warriors to a 22-5 record and the Class 2A state championship this past season. Artiles recorded 375 kills and 274 digs, including 23 kills in Westminster's 3-1 win over Trinity Catholic High School in the state final. She also compiled 44 service aces and 35 blocks while posting a .440 kill percentage at net. Ranked as the nation's No. 11 recruit in the Class of 2026 by PrepDig.com, she concluded her junior year with 1,271 kills in her prep volleyball career.

Artiles and her sister, Bella, co-founded Angel Share Charity in 2009, which assists low-income families in her community. She has also volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach. "Gigi is a dynamic hitter and a solid, six-rotation player," said Matt Willems, head coach of Divine Savior Academy. "She simply took over in the state semifinals and state championship matches and willed her team to victory. She's the real deal."

Artiles has maintained a weighted 4.14 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play volleyball at the University of Georgia beginning in the fall of 2026.

The <u>Gatorade Player of the Year</u> program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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.

Artiles joins recent Gatorade Florida Volleyball Players of the Year Izzy Starck (2023-24, Viera High School), Jordyn Byrd (2022-23 & 2021-22, Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School) and Paris Thompson (2020-21, Fort Myers 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, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate studentathletes, visit <u>playeroftheyear.gatorade.com</u> or follow us on social media on Instagram at <u>instagram.com/Gatorade</u>. Facebook at <u>facebook.com/GatoradePOY</u> and X(Twitter) at <u>x.com/Gatorade</u>.