

**BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 **McKenna O’Connell** of **Bedford High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Player of the Year**. O’Connell is the fourth Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bedford High 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 O’Connell as New Hampshire’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 5-foot-8 senior setter led the Bulldogs to a 21-1 record and their fifth consecutive Division I state championship this past season. O’Connell compiled 318 assists, 177 digs and 89 kills to go along with 33 aces. An AVCA All-Region selection and three-time First Team All-State selection, O’Connell concluded her prep career as Bedford’s career leader with 1,847 assists. Her sister, Caleigh O’Connell, was a two-time Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Player of the Year.

A member of Bedford High School’s leadership club, O’Connell has volunteered locally with Fueled by Kid, a program committed to ending food insecurity for children. “McKenna’s ability to read the game and make quick decisions has set the tone for our offense all season,” said Naomi Rascati, head coach at Bedford High School. “Most importantly, McKenna has brought Bedford volleyball more than just stats. She is a natural leader who takes charge with a commanding presence and brings our team together.”

O’Connell has maintained a weighted 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play volleyball at Saint Anselm College this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) 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.

O’Connell joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Volleyball Players of the Year Lana McCarthy (2023-24, Bedford High School), Lindsey Healey (2022-23, Bedford High School) and Caleigh O’Connell (2021-22 & 2020-21, Bedford 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 student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.