

**SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OHIO 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 **Belle Groomes** of **Saint Joseph Academy** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year**. Groomes is the first Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Saint Joseph Academy.

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 Groomes as Ohio’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-1 senior setter and right side hitter recorded 706 assists and 213 kills this past season, leading the Jaguars (19-9) to the Division I state championship match. Groomes also compiled 202 digs, 69 service aces and 48 blocks while posting a .478 kill percentage on the year. A three-time District 2 Player of the Year, she is a two-time First Team All-State selection as well and concluded her prep volleyball career with 1,432 assists and 856 kills.

A school ambassador at St. Joseph’s, Groomes has volunteered locally as a youth volleyball coach. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her school’s National Honor Society. “The impact Belle has on a team is the only reason St. Joe’s went as far as they did,” said Danny Coughlin, head coach of Gilmour Academy. “She is a great leader, she’s intense, she plays with emotions. Belle has the ability to will her team to win and that is infectious.”

Groomes has maintained a weighted 4.08 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Groomes inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for her to enroll at the University of San Diego, where she will play volleyball. She graduated from high school in December and will attend classes in the spring semester.

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.

Groomes joins recent Gatorade Ohio Volleyball Players of the Year Alec Rothe (2023-24, Scioto High School), Eloise Brandewie (2022-23, Bishop Hartley High School) and Kathryn Randorf (2021-22 & 2020-21, Gilmour Academy), 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.