

PROSPER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 8, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ayden Ames of Prosper High School is the 2023-24 Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year. Ames is the first Gatorade Texas Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Prosper 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 Ames as Texas' 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-4 senior outside and middle hitter led the Eagles to a 37-10 record this season and a berth in the 6A state semifinals, marking the program's first state tournament appearance since 2017. Ames amassed 575 kills, averaging 4.8 per set, while posting a .399 hitting percentage and .500 kill percentage. She also shined on defense, recording 165 blocks and 481 digs (4.0 per set). A MaxPreps and American Volleyball Coaches Association First Team All-American, she was named the Dallas Morning News Player of the Year and played for the United States women's under-19 national team during its gold-medal performance at the FIVB World Championships in August.

Ames has volunteered locally collecting and donating clothing, blankets and towels for women's shelters and pet shelters in addition to participating in the Heal The Bay coastal clean-up in Manhattan Beach, Calif. A member of her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, she has donated her time as a tutor and mentor for a young boy with brittle bone disease. She has also served her community as a first aid assistant at road races, as part of a literacy outreach program at an elementary school and as a youth volleyball coach at camps and clinics. "Ayden is a physical presence that you have to be aware of when she's front row," said Allen High School head coach Stephanie Poole. "Her blocking is outrageous—you can't get it past her, and you can't go high hands because she's technically sound and strong. What impresses me most is her leadership. Ayden is a winner. She puts her team on her shoulders and makes those around her better."

Ames has maintained a 3.9 GPA in the classroom. Taking advantage of NCAA early signing rules, Ames inked a financial-aid agreement that paved the way for her to enroll at the University of Texas, 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 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.

Ames joins recent Gatorade Texas Volleyball Players of the Year Macaria Spears (2022-23, Prestonwood Christian Academy), Averi Carlson (2021-22, Lovejoy High School), Ally Batenhorst (2020-21, Seven Lakes High School), and Paige Flickinger (2019-20, Byron Nelson 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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