

## CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

**CHICAGO** (March 6, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Jana Van Gytenbeek of Cherry Creek High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Colorado Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Van Gytenbeek is the first Gatorade Colorado Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cherry Creek High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Van Gytenbeek as Colorado's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Van Gytenbeek joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville High School, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo High School, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis High School, Ind.), Katie Smith (1991-92, Logan High School, Ohio) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7 senior point guard had led the Bruins to a 22-2 record and a berth in the third round of the Class 5A state tournament at the time of her selection. Van Gytenbeek averaged 18.3 points, 7.7 assists, 3.9 rebounds and 3.2 steals through 24 games as Cherry Creek chased a state championship repeat. A two-time First Team All-State selection, Gytenbeek is ranked nation's No. 29 recruit in the Class of 2020 by Prospects Nation. She entered the third round of the state tournament with 1,707 career points and a state-record 656 career assists.

Van Gytenbeek has volunteered locally with Project C.U.R.E., which raises money to benefit hospitals and clinics in the developing world. She has also donated her time on behalf of the Salvation Army and as a youth basketball coach. "Jana does it all," said Frank Cawley, head coach of Mullen High. "She can score at will. She is unselfish. She is a lock-down defender and can handle the ball so well that she will single-handedly break almost any full-court pressure. Most importantly, she is a floor leader."

Van Gytenbeek has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Stanford University this fall.

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 and field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Van Gytenbeek joins Gatorade Colorado Girls Basketball Players of the Year Francesca Belibi (2018-19, Regis Jesuit High School), Camilla Emsbo (2017-18, Lakewood High School), Michaela Onyenwere (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Grandview High School), and Justine Hall (2013-14, Regis Jesuit High School) as athletes who have won the basketball award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Van Gytenbeek also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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