

ST. JOSEPH CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 6, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Grace Hutson of St. Joseph Central Catholic High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Hutson is the second Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Joseph Central Catholic 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 Hutson as West Virginia'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, Hutson 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-10 junior guard led the Irish to a 21-1 record and the Class A state tournament at the time of her selection. Hutson averaged 19.5 points, 4.5 rebounds, 2.6 steals and 1.9 assists through 22 games. The District Player of the Year for both her freshman and sophomore seasons at Christiansburg (Va.) High, Hutson is ranked as the nation's No. 19 guard in the class of 2021 by ESPN.com.

Hutson volunteers locally as a youth basketball coach and in the nursery of her church. A member of the Mu Alpha Theta math honor society at St. Joseph, Hutson has also donated her time as a math tutor. "Grace's overall floor presence stands out," said Pete Fraley, head coach at Boyd County (Ky.) High. "A lot of kids can go out and score 30, but most can't guard anybody. She has it defensively and she can score. Put Hutson in any class in any state and she would still be really good."

Hutson has maintained a 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Hutson joins Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Players of the Year Emily Saunders (2018-19, Wyoming East High School), Hanna McClung (2017-18, Buckhannon-Upshur High School), Jordyn Dawson (2016-17 & 2015-16, Huntington High School), Shayna Gore (2014-15, Logan High School), and Mychal Johnson (2013-14, St. Joseph Central Catholic 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," Hutson 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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