

**WESTTOWN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 9, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kaylene Smikle** of **Westtown School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Smikle is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Westtown 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 court, distinguishes Smikle as Pennsylvania'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, Smikle joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Skylar Diggins-Smith (2008-09, Washington High School, Ind.), Nneka Ogwumike (2007-08, CyFair High School, Texas), Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), and Lisa Leslie (1989-90, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-1 senior guard led the Moose to a 23-4 record and the Pennsylvania Independent Schools Athletic Association state championship this past season. Smikle averaged 23.0 points, 6.3 rebounds and 2.0 steals. A First Team All-Friends Schools League honoree, she was an All-EYBL selection this past summer and is ranked as the nation's No. 64 prospect in the Class of 2022 by ESPN.

A devoted member of her church community, Smikle has volunteered locally by feeding the homeless. "Kaylene just dominated this year, both in the FSL and in the tough non-conference schedule that Westtown played," said La'Keisha Sutton, head coach at George School. "Even though I was coaching against her, she was fun to watch, because of her efficiency and her unselfish play."

Smikle has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Rutgers 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 & 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.

Smikle joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kaitlyn Orihel (2020-21, Archbishop Wood High School), Diamond Johnson (2019-20 & 2018-19, Neumann-Goretti High School), and Alli Campbell (2017-18, Bellwood-Antis High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the court. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Smikle has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Smikle is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.