

MADISON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 8, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Kayla McPherson of Madison County High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. McPherson is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Madison County 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 McPherson as Georgia'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, McPherson 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, 2002-03 & 2003-04, 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 sophomore point guard averaged 23.7 points, 6.5 rebounds, 5.3 assists and 3.5 steals per game this past season, leading the Red Raiders (25-3) to the second round of the Class AAAA state tournament. McPherson played both games in the state tournament with a broken bone in her shooting hand, and she still managed to score 37 points in the two contests. Rated as the No. 4 recruit in the Class of 2021 by ProspectsNation.com she scored a school-record 64 points in a 93-68 win over Hart County on Jan. 5.

McPherson has volunteered locally helping the homeless on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. "Kayla is great at taking it to the basket and creating opportunities for herself or for her teammates," said Carolyn Whitney, head coach of Brookwood High School. "Her passion and competitive nature are really contagious, too."

McPherson has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 & 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.

McPherson joins Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jenna Brown (2017-18, The Lovett School), Mikayla Coombs (2016-17, Wesleyan School), Jenna Staiti (2015-16, West Forsyth High School), and Asia Durr (2014-15 & 2013-14, St. Pius X Catholic High School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," McPherson 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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