

## **DERBY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KANSAS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 8, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Kennedy Brown of Derby High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Brown is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Derby 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 Brown as Kansas' 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, Brown 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 6-foot-6 senior center had led the Panthers to a 21-0 record and a berth in the Class 6A state tournament at the time of her selection. Brown averaged 17.5 points, 11.7 rebounds, 3.8 blocks and 1.7 steals through 21 games. A First Team All-State honoree, she was named the Sports in Kansas Class 6A Player of the Year and has been chosen to play in the McDonald's All-American Game.

Brown has donated her time assisting the elderly in her community and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "What makes Kennedy Brown elite is her ability to change the game on the defensive end," said Ryan Stuart, head coach at Salina South High School. "She's such a great rim protector and rebounder. She can also finish around the rim with both hands and stretch the floor all the way out to the three-point arc."

Brown has maintained a weighted 4.42 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Oregon State 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. 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.

Brown joins Gatorade Kansas Girls Basketball Players of the Year Emily Ryan (2017-18, Central Plains High School), Taylor Robertson (2016-17, McPherson High School), Kendrian Elliott (2015-16, Wichita South High School), Keiryn Swenson (2014-15, Maize High School), and Kaylee Page (2013-14, Wamego High School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

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