

## MAINLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 **Kylee Watson of Mainland Regional High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Watson is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mainland Regional 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 Watson as New Jersey'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, Watson 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 6-foot-4 senior forward led the Mustangs to a 18-6 record and the South Jersey Group 3 tournament at the time of her selection. Watson averaged 17.7 points, 9.9 rebounds, 4.3 assists and 2.8 blocks through 24 games. A First Team All-State honoree and the two-time Press of Atlantic City Player of the Year, she has been chosen to play in both the McDonald's All-American Game and the Jordan Brand Classic.

Watson has volunteered locally on behalf of blood-donation drives, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, youth basketball clinics and a Down syndrome awareness group. "Kylee Watson is a one-of-a-kind player," said Mike Pittman, head coach at Lower Cape May High. "She's able to impact the game in all areas. She can handle the ball, shoot, rebound and she's a great defender. There aren't many times you see a 6-foot-4 girl with her abilities."

Watson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

Watson joins Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Players of the Year Diamond Miller (2018-19, Franklin High School), Dara Mabrey (2017-18 & 2016-17, Manasquan High School), Jocelyn Willoughby (2015-16, Newark Academy), Marina Mabrey (2014-15, Manasquan High School), and Taylor Rooks (2013-14, Gill St. Bernard's 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," Watson 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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