

## KETTERING FAIRMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OHIO 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 **Madeline Westbeld of Kettering Fairmont High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Westbeld is the first Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kettering Fairmont 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 Westbeld as Ohio'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, Westbeld 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-3 senior forward led the Firebirds to a 24-2 record and the Division I regional semifinals at the time of her selection. Westbeld averaged 18 points, 11.2 rebounds, 3.6 assists and 2.8 steals through 26 games. The two-time Greater Western Ohio Conference Player of the Year, she was a First Team All-Ohio selection and has been chosen to play in the McDonald's All-American Game.

A member of her school's DECA club, Westbeld has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "Westbeld has the ability to play virtually any position on the floor as well as guard any position," said Bethany Kincer, head coach at Northmont High. "She's a great all-around leader and she has such a high basketball IQ that she makes everyone on her team better."

Westbeld has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Westbeld joins Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jordan Horston (2018-19, Columbus Africentric Early College High School), Kierstan Bell (2017-18, Canton McKinley High School), Dee Bekelja (2016-17, Solon High School), Jensen Caretti (2015-16, River High School), Hallie Thome (2014-15, Chagrin Falls High School), and Kelsey Mitchell (2013-14, Princeton 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," Westbeld 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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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