

THE VANGUARD SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® COLORADO BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 26, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Dominique Clifford of The Vanguard School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Clifford is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from The Vanguard 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 Clifford as Colorado’s best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award, Clifford joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln High School, Texas), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood High School, Calif.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington High School, Colo.) and Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-5, 185-pound senior guard led the Coursers to a 22-2 record and a berth in the Class 3A state tournament quarterfinals at the time of his selection. Clifford averaged 26.3 points, 13.7 rebounds, 5.9 assists, 3.5 steals and 2.8 blocks through 24 games as Vanguard sought to defend its state title. A 2019 Class 3A First Team All-State selection, he is a two-time Colorado Springs Gazette All-Area honoree. He entered the state quarterfinals with 1,616 points in his prep basketball career.

A Vanguard School ambassador, Clifford has volunteered locally at Penrose Hospital and has donated his time as a youth basketball coach. “Dominique is a difference-maker at both ends of the floor,” said Scott Crites, head coach of Buena Vista High. “He can play at another level that not many kids can get to. His length and athleticism are tough to find.”

Clifford has maintained a 3.17 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Colorado this fall.

Clifford joins Gatorade Colorado Boys Basketball Players of the Year Kenny Foster (2018-19, Smoky Hill High School), Sam Masten (2017-18, Rock Canyon High School), Colbey Ross (2016-17 & 2015-16, Eaglecrest High School) and Brian Carey (2014-15, Denver East High School) among the state’s list of former award winners.

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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

The 2019-2020 Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year announcement has been temporarily postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. To ensure the safety of everyone involved, The Gatorade Company will follow the guidance of experts and health officials as it determines the appropriate time to announce this year’s winner.

As a part of Gatorade’s cause marketing platform “Play it Forward,” Clifford also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He 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.

###