

BELLEVUE WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 **Chucky Hepburn of Bellevue West High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Hepburn is the third Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellevue West 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 Hepburn as Nebraska's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award, Hepburn 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-1, 180-pound junior guard led the Thunderbirds to a 21-3 record and the Class A state tournament at the time of his selection. Hepburn averaged 17.7 points, 6.1 assists, 4.6 rebounds and 3.1 steals through 24 games. An All-State and All-Metro honoree, he was selected to both the Omaha World-Herald All-Nebraska First Team and the Lincoln Journal Star Super-State First Team.

Hepburn has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth basketball programs. "Chucky Hepburn makes everyone around him better," said Bill Morrison, head coach at Millard West High. "He can, and will, take over a game defensively, and he's a team-first player. He could average a lot more points if he wanted to, but that's not a concern for him."

Hepburn has maintained a weighted 4.22 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school this fall.

Hepburn joins Gatorade Nebraska Boys Basketball Players of the Year Akol Arop (2018-19, Creighton Prep), Shereef Mitchell (2017-18, Burke High School), Teddy Allen (2016-17, Boys Town High School), Aguek Arop (2015-16, Omaha South High School), and Tyler Hagedorn (2014-15, Norfolk 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," Hepburn 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.

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