

**MUSCLE SHOALS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 27, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Sara Puckett of Muscle Shoals High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Alabama Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Puckett is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Muscle Shoals 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 Puckett as Alabama'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 June, Puckett joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Skylar Diggins-Smith (2008-09, Washington High School, Ind.), Nneka Ogwumike (2007-08, Cy-Fair High School, Texas), Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), and Lisa Leslie (1989-90, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 6-foot-2 senior guard and forward averaged 21.4 points and 10.1 rebounds per game this past season, leading the Trojans (15-10) to the Class 6A state tournament. Puckett also contributed 2.6 assists, 2.3 steals and 1.6 blocks per game. Ranked as the nation's No. 28 recruit by Prospects Nation, Puckett is a two-time First Team All-State selection. A six-year varsity player, she concluded her prep basketball career with 2,349 points and 1,215 rebounds.

A student ambassador at Muscle Shoals High, Puckett has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Sara was good enough to almost single-handedly beat us three times," said Josh Hembree, head coach of Cullman High. "She has a unique skill set that I feel will certainly translate into success at the SEC level."

Puckett has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Puckett joins recent Gatorade Alabama Girls Basketball Players of the Year Sarah Ashlee Barker (2019-20, Spain Park High School), Annie Hughes (2018-19, Pisgah High School), Zipporah Broughton (2017-18, Lee High School), and Bianca Jackson (2016-17, Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Puckett has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Puckett is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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