

**INCARNATE WORD ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Natalie Potts of Incarnate Word Academy as its 2020-21 Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Potts is the fifth Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Incarnate Word Academy.

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 Potts as Missouri'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, Potts 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 sophomore forward led the Red Knights to a 29-0 record and the Class 6 state championship this past season. Potts averaged 20.8 points, 9.3 rebounds, 2.6 steals, 1.5 blocks and 1.2 assists, and she clicked for a double-double in IWA's 58-37 win over Webster Groves High in the state final. A Class 6 First Team All-State selection, she concluded her sophomore year with a total of 915 points and 526 rebounds in her prep basketball career.

Potts has volunteered with her local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and she has donated her time as a youth basketball coach. "The thing about Natalie is that she plays both ends of the court," said Jeff Gaona, head coach of Nerinx Hall. "Her offensive numbers are very impressive, but she also alters tons of shots defensively and she runs the floor at such a high level that she is a huge asset in the press. She affects the game in so many ways."

Potts has maintained a weighted 4.12 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Potts joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Players of the Year Katie Scott (2019-20, Carl Junction High School), Hayley Frank (2018-19 & 2017-18, Strafford High School), and Lauryn Miller (2016-17, Kirkwood High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Potts has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Potts 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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