

**MOUNT NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OHIO GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 27, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced KK Bransford of Mount Notre Dame High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Bransford is the first Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Notre Dame 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 Bransford 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 June, Bransford joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Skylar Diggins-Smith (2008-09, Washington High School, Ind.), Nneka Ogumike (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 5-foot-11 junior guard led the Cougars (28-0) to an unbeaten record and the Division 1 state championship this past season. Bransford averaged 21.3 points, 6.1 rebounds, 4.9 assists and 3.0 steals per game. The Division 1 Player of the Year, she is also a two-time Greater Catholic League Player of the Year and was selected as Ohio's Ms. Basketball.

Bransford has volunteered locally on behalf of Sisters Helping Sisters, Ronald McDonald House Charities, toy-donation drives and youth basketball camps. "KK Bransford is an electric player," said Adam Priefer, head coach at Centerville High. "She's a long, active defender, a great rebounder, dynamic scorer, good passer. She can do it all."

Bransford has maintained a 3.68 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Bransford joins recent Gatorade Ohio Girls Basketball Players of the Year Madeline Westbeld (2019-20, Kettering Fairmont High School), Jordan Horston (2018-19, Columbus Africentric Early College High School), Kierstan Bell (2017-18, Canton McKinley High School), and Dee Bekelja (2016-17, Solon High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Bransford has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Bransford 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 www.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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