

**IOLANI SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 9, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Jovi Wahinekapu Lefotu** of **Iolani School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Hawaii Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Wahinekapu Lefotu is the eighth Gatorade Hawaii Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Iolani 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 court, distinguishes Wahinekapu Lefotu as Hawaii'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 March, Wahinekapu Lefotu 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, CyFair 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-9 senior guard led the Raiders to an 18-2 record and the Division I state championship that past season. Wahinekapu Lefotu averaged 15.2 points per game and scored 14 points to go with eight rebounds in Iolani's 28-17 win over Konawaena in the title game. The sister of 2020-21 Hawaii Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year Lily Wahinekapu Lefotu, Jovi was named the Most Outstanding Player at the state tournament.

Wahinekapu Lefotu has volunteered locally as a coach on behalf of Iolani basketball clinics, and she has donated her time to both Adopt-A-Highway and the Iolani Thanksgiving Food Drive. "Jovi Wahinekapu Lefotu was clearly the best player in the state this year—she makes everyone around her better," said Chico Furtado, head coach of Maryknoll High School. "She has no weaknesses. She can score inside and out, is a great passer, defends all positions and her leadership is off the charts. She has an extremely calm demeanor and doesn't get flustered. It was a pleasure watching her play."

Wahinekapu Lefotu has maintained a 3.38 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Hawaii 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Wahinekapu Lefotu joins recent Gatorade Hawaii Girls Basketball Volleyball Players of the Year Lily Lefotu Wahinekapu (2020-21, Iolani School), Caiyle Kaupu (2019-20, Konawaena High School), Kalina Obrey (2018-19, Kamehameha Schools - Kapalama High School), and Cherilyn Molina (2017-18, Konawaena High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the court. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Wahinekapu Lefotu has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Wahinekapu Lefotu is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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