

**MERIDIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Debreasha Powe** of **Meridian High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Powe is the second Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Meridian 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 court, distinguishes Powe as Mississippi'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, Powe 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, 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 6-foot-2 senior guard and forward had led the Wildcats to a 26-3 record and a berth in the Class 6A state championship game at the time of her selection. Powe averaged 19.8 points, 10.5 rebounds, 4.0 steals and 3.0 blocks through 29 games. A First Team All-State selection, she's also been named to the Clarion Ledger's Dandy Dozen.

Powe has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and the North Pointe Health and Rehabilitation for seniors. "Debreasha Powe is an all-around player who never takes a night off," said Ruth Buck, head coach at Terry High School. "She gets it done on offense and hustles back to play defense just as hard."

Powe has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Mississippi State University 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.

Powe joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Players of the Year Madison Booker (2020-21, Germantown High School), Jacorriah Bracey (2019-20, Thomas E. Edwards High School), Endya Buford (2018-19, Olive Branch High School), and Destiny Haymer (2017-18, Holmes County Central 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, Powe 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. Powe 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.