

**KICKAPOO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Ysabella Fontleroy** of **Kickapoo High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Fontleroy is the first Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kickapoo 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 Fontleroy 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 March, Fontleroy 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 Chiefs to a 25-3 record and a berth in the Class 6, District 5 Tournament championship game at the time of her selection. Fontleroy averaged 24.0 points, 10.9 rebounds and 1.6 steals per game through 28 games. A 2021 First Team All-State selection, Fontleroy missed her entire sophomore year with a knee injury. She is ranked as the nation's No. 27 recruit in the Class of 2022 by PrepGirlsHoops.com.

Fontleroy has volunteered locally with the Salvation Army and as a peer mentor and tutor, and she has also donated her time as a youth basketball coach. "Ysabella is one of the most well-rounded players I have seen in a long time," said Keri Nichols, head coach of Parkview High School. "She can bring the ball up the court against any type of pressure, she can shoot the 3, she can take you off the dribble or she can post you up with her back to the basket. She is one of the most dominant players that I have seen in Missouri."

Fontleroy has maintained a weighted 4.68 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Baylor 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.

Fontleroy joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Players of the Year Natalie Potts (2020-21, Incarnate Word Academy), Katie Scott (2019-20, Carl Junction High School), and Hayley Frank (2018-19 & 2017-18, Strafford 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, Fontleroy 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. Fontleroy 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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