

**BILLINGS CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Mya Hansen** of **Billings Central Catholic High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Hansen is the second Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Billings Central Catholic 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 Hansen as Montana'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, Hansen 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 5-foot-9 senior guard had led the Rams to an 18-3 record and a berth in the Class A state quarterfinals at the time of her selection. Hansen averaged 17.6 points, 4.5 rebounds, 2.6 assists and 2.1 steals per game through 21 games. A three-time All-State selection, Hansen was also the 2021 MaxPreps State Player of the Year. She entered the state tournament with 1,413 points in her prep basketball career.

The senior class representative on the Billings Central Student Council, Hansen was nominated as the Student of the Year for the Breakfast Exchange Club of Billings for her academic achievement, community involvement and leadership. She has volunteered locally as a school ambassador and as a religious activities leader. She has also donated her time as a youth basketball coach. "Mya leads by example and makes every person around her better," said Jetton Ailes, head coach of Billings Central High School. "She is willing and always ready to do whatever is asked to make the team successful."

Hansen has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Butler 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.

Hansen joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Dani Bartsch (2020-21, Capital High School), Kyndall Keller (2019-20, Havre High School), and Jamie Pickens (2018-19 & 2017-18, Helena 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, Hansen 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. Hansen 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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