

**RICE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VERMONT 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 **Elyse MacDonald** of **Rice Memorial High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Vermont Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. MacDonald is the fourth Gatorade Vermont Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rice Memorial 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 MacDonald as Vermont'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, MacDonald 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-7 sophomore guard had led the Green Knights to an 18-1 record and a berth in the Division 1 state championship game at the time of her selection. MacDonald averaged 15.4 points, 3.5 assists, 2.4 rebounds and 1.5 steals through 19 games. A First Team All-Metro selection, she was also named to the Vermont Dream Dozen.

MacDonald has volunteered locally on behalf of a basketball program for special needs students and has donated her time to community clean-up initiatives. "Elyse MacDonald is a strong scorer and a leader for her team," said Jade Huntington, head coach at St. Johnsbury Academy. "She makes a lot of big plays, and as young as she is, she makes a big impact."

MacDonald has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

MacDonald joins recent Gatorade Vermont Girls Basketball Players of the Year Catherine Gilwee (2020-21, Champlain Valley Union High School), Olivia Rockwood (2019-20, Windsor High School), and Sadie Stetson (2018-19 & 2017-18, St. Johnsbury Academy), 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, MacDonald 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. MacDonald 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.