

**RAYMOND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 **Kyra Gardner** of **Raymond High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Gardner is the first Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Raymond 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 Gardner as Washington'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, Gardner 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-11 senior guard and forward led the Seagulls to a 19-3 record and the Class 2B quarterfinals this past season. Gardner averaged 27.1 points, 9.9 rebounds, 7.0 steals, 5.1 assists and 2.3 blocks per game. A three-time Pacific League MVP, she was also a First Team All-State selection.

Also a volleyball standout and a state high jump champion, Gardner has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and the Raymond Elks Lodge Emergency Meals Program. "Kyra Gardner is one of the most complete players that I've seen in our state," said Shane Schutz, head coach at Napavine High School "She can score, rebound, defend and has the ability to make others around her better."

Gardner has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Washington 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.

Gardner joins recent Gatorade Washington Girls Basketball Players of the Year Julianna Walker (2020-21, Annie Wright Schools), Hailey Van Lith (2019-20, Cashmere High School), Hailey Van Lith (2018-19, Cashmere High School), and Lexie Hull (2017-18, Central Valley 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, Gardner 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. Gardner 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.