

**HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 9, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Dionna Gray** of **Huntington High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Gray is the fourth Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Huntington 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 Gray as West Virginia'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, Gray 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-4 senior guard had led the Highlanders to a 21-1 record and a berth in the Class AAAA state tournament at the time of her selection. Gray averaged 21.7 points, 5.1 rebounds, 7.3 assists, 5.8 steals per game through 22 games. The Highlanders' team captain, she was named the Mountain State Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

Gray has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Playing Dionna three times has shown me how she's clearly the best player in the state," said Chris Murray, head coach of Parkersburg High School. "In our last two games, we have worked hard to shut her down, but she makes her impact felt in other ways. She's also a great leader to her team."

Gray has maintained a 4.1 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Kent 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.

Gray joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Girls Basketball Players of the Year Marley Washenitz (2020-21, Fairmont Senior High School), Grace Hutson (2019-20, St. Joseph Central Catholic High School), Emily Saunders (2018-19, Wyoming East High School), and Hanna McClung (2017-18, Buckhannon-Upshur 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, Gray 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. Gray 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).