

**WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 16, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Stewart Erhart** of **West Valley High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Alaska Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Erhart is the first Gatorade Alaska Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Valley 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 Erhart as Alaska's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Erhart joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.), Karl-Anthony Towns (2012-13 & 2013-14, St. Joseph High School, N.J.), Jabari Parker (2011-12, Simeon Career Academy, Ill.) and Dwight Howard (2003-04, Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.).

The 6-foot-2, 150-pound junior guard had led the Wolfpack to a 23-0 record and a berth in the conference finals at the time of his selection. Erhart averaged 16.1 points, 5.9 rebounds, 3.8 steals and 2.5 assists through 23 games. An All-Mid Alaska Conference selection, he was MVP of the Palmer Elks Showdown and the Whaler Invitational.

Erhart has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs. "Erhart has a real understanding of the game, above everyone else," said Josh Muehlenkamp, head coach at West Anchorage High School. "He gets to his spots, he can hit tough shots and he has great court sense. He rebounds and defends, and puts his teammates in places where they can succeed."

Erhart has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will begin his senior 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.

Erhart joins recent Gatorade Alaska Boys Basketball Players of the Year Patrick McMahon (2020-21, Colony High School), Isaiah Moses (2019-20, Dimond High School), Sullivan Menard (2018-19, Colony High School), and Tobin Karlberg (2017-18, Grace Christian 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, Erhart 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. Erhart 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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