

**NORTH LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Reed Sheppard** of **North Laurel High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Sheppard is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Laurel 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 Sheppard as Kentucky'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, Sheppard 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-3, 175-pound junior guard had led the Jaguars to a 28-5 record and a berth in the state tournament at the time of his selection. Sheppard averaged 25.5 points, 7.6 assists, 6.8 rebounds and 4.4 steals per game through 33 games. Entering the postseason, Sheppard had connected on 54.7 percent of his shots from the field (303-of-554), including 38.5 percent of his 3-pointers (70-of-182). He began the state tournament with 2,917 points in his prep basketball career.

Sheppard has volunteered locally on behalf of literacy-outreach projects and as a youth basketball coach. "Reed is a special talent," said Tony Pietrowski, head coach of Corbin High School. "He is, in fact, the straw that stirs the drink. When he is doubled or chased, he passes the ball and gets his teammates involved. When he is guarded 1-on-1, he can score in loads."

Sheppard has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Sheppard joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Boys Basketball Players of the Year Sam Vinson (2020-21, Highlands High School), Alex Matthews (2019-20, John Hardin High School), Isaiah Cozart (2018-19, Madison Central High School), and CJ Fredrick (2017-18, Covington Catholic 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, Sheppard 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. Sheppard 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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