

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 **Chansey Willis** of **Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Willis is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Martin Luther King Jr. Senior 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 Willis as Michigan'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, Willis 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, 190-pound senior guard had led the Crusaders to a 19-2 record and a berth in the Division 1, District 24 championship game at the time of his selection. Willis averaged 24.0 points, 10.3 assists, 9.3 rebounds and 4.5 steals per game through 21 contests. A member of the 2021 MLive.com Dream Team as a junior, he recorded a triple-double of 16 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists in a 66-38 win over Detroit Western High in the Detroit Public School League championship game.

Willis has volunteered locally with CeaseFire Detroit, speaking to youths about the perils of gun and gang violence. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball coach and mentor. "Chansey truly dominates a game," said Anthony Paciero, head coach of Detroit Southeastern High School. "He rebounds, he gets others involved, he plays defense. A lot of guys can score or shoot, but Chansey is the difference between winning and losing."

Willis has maintained a B average in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Willis joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Basketball Players of the Year Pierre Brooks II (2020-21, Frederick Douglass Academy for Young Men), Emoni Bates (2019-20 & 2018-19, Lincoln High School) and Foster Loyer (2017-18, Clarkston 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, Willis 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. Willis 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.