

**ST. MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 8, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Tessa Johnson** of **St. Michael-Albertville High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Johnson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Michael-Albertville 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 Johnson as Minnesota's best high school girls basketball player. Johnson joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Kiki Rice (2021-22, Sidwell Friends School, Washington, D.C.), Paige Bueckers (2019-20, Hopkins High School, Minn.), Nneka Ogumike (2007-08, CyFair High School, Texas), and Candace Parker (2003-04 & 2002-03, Naperville Central High School, Ill.).

The 5-foot-11 senior shooting guard had led the Knights to a 23-3 record and the No. 1 seed in the 4A Section 8 tournament at the time of her selection. Johnson averaged 24.3 points, 6.6 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 2.8 steals per game through 26 contests and became the top scorer in program history with more than 2,100 career points. A McDonald's High School All-American Game selection, she poured in a single-game best and school-record 51 points earlier this season.

Johnson has volunteered locally on behalf of Minnesota Camp, an inclusive camp for adults with physical and intellectual challenges, serving in many roles over multiple years. She also has donated her time to various community service initiatives through her church youth group, including serving food at homeless shelters and nursing homes, working in the church nursery and cleaning homes for those who are unable. "Tessa is simply unstoppable," said Ellen Wiese, head coach at Eden Prairie High School. "She can score at will against any team, she's an excellent 3-point shooter, has an unstoppable pull-up jumper and is an excellent finisher at the rim. She is also a phenomenal passer, as her court vision is outstanding."

Johnson has maintained a 3.87 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Johnson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Maya Nnaji (2021-22, Hopkins High School), Gianna Kneepkens (2020-21, Marshall School), and Paige Bueckers (2019-20 & 2018-19, Hopkins High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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).

###