

**LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ali’a Matavao** of **Liberty High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Matavao is the second Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Liberty 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 Matavao as Nevada’s best high school girls basketball player. Matavao 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 state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot senior forward averaged 17.9 points, 11.9 rebounds, 2.9 steals, 1.7 assists and 0.5 blocks per game this past season, leading the Patriots (18-10) to the Class 5A Southern Regional semifinals. The two-time Class 5A Southern Regional Player of the Year and Las Vegas Super 7 Selection, Matavao was named the MVP of the Tampa Bay Christmas Invitational. She’s also a three-sport athlete, excelling in both track and field and volleyball.

A member of her church choir, Matavao has volunteered locally as an ambassador for the Victory Club, a drug-free advocacy program, and she has donated her time as secretary of the school’s Polynesian Club and Black Student Union. She has also served on her school’s student council. “I always have great respect for athletes who play with great energy and intensity at both ends of the court, and she challenged us in every aspect of the game,” said Megan Kelso, head coach at Chaminade High School. “She makes everyone on her team better when she has the ball, but she is also a very aggressive and athletic defender who can match up against any position.”

Matavao has maintained a weighted 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Brigham Young 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.

Two-time winner Matavao joins recent Gatorade Nevada Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Bigby (2020-21 & 2019-20, Centennial High School) and Eboni Walker (2018-19, Centennial 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.