

**ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Reese Ross** of **St. Thomas More High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Ross is the second Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Thomas More 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 Ross as South Dakota's best high school girls basketball player. Ross 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 Ogwumike (2007-08, CyFair High School, Texas), and Candace Parker (2003-04 & 2002-03, Naperville Central High School, Ill.).

At the time of her selection, the 6-foot-1 senior forward had led the Lady Cavaliers to an 18-2 record entering the Class A state tournament, scheduled to begin March 9. Ross averaged 22.1 points, 8.0 rebounds, 2.3 steals and 1.8 assists per game in the regular season. She is the No. 1-ranked player in South Dakota's Class of 2023 by PrepGirlsHoops.com.

Ross volunteers locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels and she's also an active member of her church community. "Ross is so athletic and long and finishes in a variety of ways," said Red Cloud High School head coach Matt Rama. "She really has fantastic balance, but she still plays within their system and will pass to the open player when she draws the double team. I was really impressed with her growth from last year to this year."

Ross maintains a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Utah 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.

Ross joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Ndjakalenga Mwenentanda (2021-22, Washington High School), Haleigh Timmer (2020-21, St. Thomas More High School), Emma Ronsiek (2019-20, O'Gorman High School), and Madysen Vlastuin (2018-19, Lennox 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.

###