

**KOKOMO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 15, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Flory Bidunga** of **Kokomo High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Indiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Bidunga is the first Gatorade Indiana Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Kokomo 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 Bidunga as Indiana’s best high school boys basketball player. Bidunga joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Chet Holmgren (2020-21, Minnehaha Academy, Minn.), Trae Young (2016-17, Norman North High School, Ok.), Jayson Tatum (2015-16, Chaminade College Preparatory School, Mo.), and Karl-Anthony Towns (2013-14 & 2012-13, St. Joseph High School, N.J.).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-10, 215-pound junior center had led the Wildkats to a 21-4 record and a berth in the Class 4A regional semifinals. Bidunga averaged 19.8 points, 13.5 rebounds, 4.4 blocks, 1.6 assists and 1.2 steals per game, connecting on a remarkable 82.2 percent of his field goal attempts (208-of-253) through 25 games. A member of the 2022 Indiana Basketball Coaches Association Underclass All-State Supreme 15 squad, he’s ranked as the nation’s No. 4 recruit in the Class of 2024 by ESPN.com.

Bidunga has volunteered locally on behalf of the Haitian Environmental Support Program. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball coach. “One of the most physically imposing players in the entire country, Bidunga dominates the game with defense, finishing ability, rebounding and shot-blocking,” said Paul Biancardi, National Recruiting Director for ESPN. “Over the course of his career, he’s improved his footwork and scoring skills. He runs the court with effort, moves well to defend ball screens and has shown himself to be an elite lob-catcher because of his frame and explosiveness. He’s special because he makes energy and hustle plays on a consistent basis.”

Bidunga has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Bidunga joins recent Gatorade Indiana Boys Basketball Players of the Year Fletcher Loyer (2021-22, Homestead High School), Caleb Furst (2020-21, Blackhawk Christian School), Trey Kaufman (2019-20, Silver Creek High School), and Trayce Jackson-Davis (2018-19, Center Grove 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.