

**SUNRISE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 15, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Matas Buzelis** of **Sunrise Christian Academy** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year**. Buzelis is the third Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sunrise Christian Academy.

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 Buzelis as Kansas's best high school boys basketball player. Now one of three finalists for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Buzelis 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.).

The New Hampshire 2021-22 Gatorade Player of the Year prior to transferring, the 6-foot-9, 190-pound senior guard had led the Buffaloes to a 20-6 record and a berth in the GEICO High School Nationals tournament at the time of his selection. Buzelis averaged 15.7 points, 5.6 rebounds, 1.8 assists and 1.6 blocks per game through 26 games. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, Buzelis was also a semifinalist for the Naismith High School Trophy. For the second straight year, he will represent the World team at the Nike Hoop Summit in April, and he's ranked as the nation's No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2023 by ESPN.com.

Buzelis has volunteered as an ambassador for the Rimas Kaukenas Charitable Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides charitable assistance to Lithuanian children with cancer. "Buzelis was one of the top scoring threats in the powerful National Interscholastic Basketball Conference," said Paul Biancardi, National Recruiting Director for ESPN. "He's at his best in open space, shooting jumpers or driving the ball. He's a big-time mismatch with his advanced scoring skill, natural basketball instincts and passing acumen. Overall, an intriguing next-level prospect who can excel with the ball in his hands as a point forward."

Buzelis has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a contract to play pro basketball with the NBA G League Ignite team 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.

Buzelis joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Gradey Dick (2021-22, Sunrise Christian Academy & 2019-20, Wichita Collegiate School), Kennedy Chandler (2020-21, Sunrise Christian Academy), and Christian Braun (2018-19, Blue Valley Northwest 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).