

**ETIWANDA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 14, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kennedy Smith** of **Etiwanda High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Smith is the first Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Etiwanda High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the court, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Smith as California's best high school girls basketball player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, **Smith** joins an all-star group of alumni that includes Candace Parker (2003-04, 2002-03 & 2001-02, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), Paige Bueckers (2017-18, Hopkins High School, Minn.) and Juju Watkins (2022-23 & 2021-22, Sierra Canyon School, Calif.).

At the time of her selection, the 6-foot-1 senior forward had averaged 20.2 points, 7.5 rebounds, 2.1 assists, 2.1 steals and 1.8 blocks this past season, leading the Eagles (30-3) to the CIF statewide Open Division title game. Ranked as the nation's No. 6 recruit in the Class of 2024 by both espnW and Prospects Nation, Smith is a three-time All-CIF selection, a 2024 Naismith Award semifinalist and a 2024 McDonald's All-American. She is also a two-time state Open Division tournament champion.

Smith has performed community service and has donated her time as a youth counselor on behalf of the Cathedral of Praise Church in San Bernardino. "Wing players with Kennedy's ability, size and willingness to do whatever her team needs are rare," said Kevin Lynch, Senior National Talent Evaluator for Blue Star Report. "She continuously rises to the occasion in the toughest situations. Simply put, Kennedy is a winner."

Smith has maintained a 4.04 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Southern California 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade California Girls Basketball Players of the Year Juju Watkins (2022-23 & 2021-22, Sierra Canyon School), Brooke Demetre (2020-21, Mater Dei High School) and Te-Hina Paopao (2019-20, La Jolla Country Day School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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.

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