

**TEA AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 14, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Katie Vasecka** of **Tea Area High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Vasecka is the first Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Tea Area 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 Vasecka as South Dakota’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, touting 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 led the Titans (20-4) to the Class A state semifinals this past season. Vasecka averaged 22.4 points, 9.5 rebounds, 3.7 assists, 3.0 steals and 1.7 blocks through 23 games and sparked an upset of then-unbeaten Flandreau High School in the state quarters, recording 14 points, eight rebounds five assists and three steals. Ranked as the nation’s No. 50 recruit in the Class of 2024 by Prospects Nation, she is a three-time First Team All-State selection. She entered the state semis with 1,907 points in her prep career.

Vasecka is an active member of her church youth group and has volunteered locally on behalf of The Banquet, helping to feed the less fortunate. She has also donated her time at Boom Athletics in addition to organizing a youth basketball camp to raise funds for Feeding South Dakota. “Katie is a unique talent with her combination of size and perimeter skills,” said Jamie Parish, head coach at Sioux Falls Washington High School. “Her ability to shoot it and put the ball on the floor requires you to put a quick perimeter defender on her. Her size, ability to cut to the rim and finish requires you to put someone with size on her. She is a matchup nightmare.”

Vasecka has maintained a 4.03 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at South Dakota State 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.

Vasecka joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Basketball Players of the Year Reese Ross (2022-23, St. Thomas More High School), Ndjakalenga Mwenentanda (2021-22, Washington High School), Haleigh Timmer (2020-21, St. Thomas More High School) and Emma Ronsiek (2019-20, O’Gorman High 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](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).

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