

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

CHICAGO (March 13, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Kaleena Smith** of **Ontario Christian High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Smith is the first Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ontario Christian High School.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their success on the court, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Smith as California’s best high school girls basketball player, and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Illinois), Paige Bueckers (2019-20, Hopkins High School, Minnesota) and Joyce Edwards (2023-24, Camden High School, South Carolina).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-6 sophomore point guard had led the Knights to a 30-1 record and a berth in the Southern Region Open Division Tournament championship game. Smith averaged 23.2 points, 8.1 assists, 4.5 steals and 2.7 rebounds through 31 games. She led Ontario Christian to the Southern Section Open Division Tournament championship, hitting the game-winning free throws in the final seconds of a 65-63 win over Etiwanda High School. A finalist for the Naismith Award, Smith was the 2024 MaxPreps National Freshman of the Year. She is ranked as the nation’s No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2027 by ESPN and 247Sports.

Smith has volunteered locally with the Salvation Army and as a youth basketball coach. She has also completed an internship with the Creative Artists Agency and donated her time as a youth Bible study group supporter. “Kaleena Smith just makes the game look really easy,” said Kerwin Walters, head coach of the Sage Hill School. “She lives up to the nickname of ‘Special K.’ Her pace on the floor is what you want from a point guard, but she can also put it in the hoop from anywhere. She is someone you have to game plan for at all times.”

Smith has maintained a 3.43 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 across 12 different high school sports - 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 Kennedy Smith (2023-24, Etiwanda High School), Juju Watkins (2022-23 & 2021-22, Sierra Canyon School) and Brooke Demetre (2020-21, Mater Dei 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, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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 Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.