

Kysre Gondrezick named Michigan's Miss Basketball for 2016



[Mick McCabe](#), *Detroit Free Press* 2:32 p.m. EDT March 14, 2016

Benton Harbor senior Kysre Gondrezick averaged 40.5 points per game in being named Miss Basketball 2016. Video by Perry A. Farrell / DFP



Lisa Harvey-Gondrezick needed to have a heart-to-heart talk with her youngest daughter, Kysre, as well as her parents, Ruth and Lou Harvey.

“What she told us was that they wouldn’t call the recipient until Sunday,” Kysre said. “If you didn’t get a phone call, you didn’t win.”

The call would come from a Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan official, who would be informing the coach of the winner of the 2016 Miss Basketball award.

Harvey-Gondrezick is the girls basketball coach at Benton Harbor, and her youngest daughter just so happens to be the girl who just [set the state record by scoring 72 points in the district opener](#) and was the front-runner for the award.

But everyone gathered Sunday knew that the front-runner doesn’t always win.

“Well, I just got off the phone,” Harvey-Gondrezick said then, “and unfortunately, politics takes place sometimes.”

Kysre knew what her mother was about to say next.

“I thought: ‘OK, I didn’t win,’” she said. “And then I thought: ‘Oh, well, this is not going to stop me from defining my future.’”

Her head, as well as her grandparents’ heads, drooped as Harvey-Gondrezick continued.

“Kysre, I just want you to know, we have been so proud of you, though,” she said.

“Sometimes things don’t go as planned, but I just want you to know that you are Benton Harbor’s Miss Basketball, you’re my Miss Basketball ... and you’re also the state’s Miss Basketball.”

Say what?

Everyone’s heads perked up. The screaming ensued.

Gondrezick, a 5-foot-9 guard who has signed with Michigan, is the 35th winner of the Miss Basketball award, given annually to the state’s top senior by BCAM, in conjunction with the Free Press.

And Gondrezick won in an absolute rout, more than tripling the first-place votes of runner-up Mardrekia Cook. She totaled 4,887 points, Muskegon’s Cook had 2,900 and third-place finisher Alexis Sevillian of Goodrich had 2,245 points.

The logical explanation for the landslide was Gondrezick’s incredible senior year that saw her become the first girl in state history to top the 40-point-per-game mark, averaging 40.5 points.

She scored 851 points this season, second only to Michigan State redshirt senior Jasmine Hines, who scored 935 points for Central Lake in the 2009-10 season.

Gondrezick’s career total of 2,827 points also is second to Hines (3,034).

She is only the fourth Miss Basketball to sign with U-M -- the most recent was U-M senior Madison Ristovski, who played at Grosse Pointe Woods University Liggett.

Word that she won the award initially stunned Gondrezick.

“I was kind of, like, speechless,” she said. “I’m still in the moment in space where it truly hasn’t hit me yet. It is a prestigious honor and award, and I humbly accept it. It’s exciting.”

Gondrezick remembers starting her first game as a freshman, when the Tigers opened the season against Stevensville Lakeshore. Early in the game, she was fouled. Her first point was a free throw.

“I only scored 17 points in my first game,” she said. “But in my second, we played Niles, and I scored 30, and that was a big deal. But compared to what I’m doing now, I look back and think that was nothing.”

Seventeen points does seem like a drop in the bucket compared with the 72 she scored in an 80-78 double-overtime victory over Buchanan in the first game of the state tournament, breaking the record of 69 points that Detroit Mumford’s Debra Walker scored in 1979.

“That still hasn’t hit me yet,” Gondrezick said. “I think when I have the chance to truly settle down, because everything has been going so fast, once when I get that moment, it will finally hit me. A lot of people are telling me that record will probably be around a very long time.”

When speaking to the Free Press shortly after that game, Gondrezick said she thought she scored about 50 points, which was more than her mother estimated her daughter had scored.

“It’s like it didn’t happen that night,” said Harvey-Gondrezick. “Kysre gets in a groove, and she just does that. It’s not something that she tries to do. I did not know she had 72, I thought she had 40 because all you’re looking at is you want to be ahead at the end of the night.”

Benton Harbor won that night and reached the district finals, where it was eliminated from the tournament.

A year ago, Gondrezick and her sister Kalabrya, a freshman at Michigan State, helped the Tigers reach the Class B semifinals.

The 1,507 votes cast were the most in years. A year ago, 1,124 votes were cast. In 2014, only 659 coaches voted.

Gondrezick earned 790 first-place votes while Cook had 281, which led to an easy victory for Gondrezick and a Miss Basketball award for Benton Harbor, where her mother played.

“To bring this back to my community is what’s most important to me,” she said. “This is the least that I can do to give back. You pay \$5 to come watch me play, at least I can put on a good performance so you can enjoy it. Give you your money’s worth.”