

2024 Michigan Miss Basketball: Gabby Reynolds, Holland West Ottawa

Mick McCabe

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When Gabby Reynolds was a freshman she asked Holland West Ottawa girls basketball Paul Chapman if she could wear jersey No. 1.

There was no No. 1 jersey, so Reynolds chose No. 3.

“It was the next closest jersey number to No. 1,” she said.

Before this season, Chapman ordered a No. 1 jersey but didn’t tell her about it until he pulled it out of the closet midway through this season.

Reynolds already was having an outstanding season, but Chapman saw even more than that in the 5-foot-9 senior point guard.

“If you’re a Miss Basketball candidate, you’ve got to be like a No. 1 type player,” he told her when he handed her the jersey. “It was just a little mind game thing.”

The mind game kind of worked. In nine of the next 10 games, Reynolds scored 30 or more, including a 47-point effort.



Last week Reynolds’ father, Keith, was speaking to Chapman on the phone and when he hung up, Reynolds asked: “What was that all about?”

“Follow me,” he told her.

His wife, LeeAnne, was in Gabby's room and as he spoke, he pointed to Gabby and told his wife:

"You're looking at Miss Basketball."

Gabby Reynolds is the 43rd recipient of the Mick McCabe Miss Basketball award, given annually to the top senior in the state.

In one of the closest races in history, Reynolds totaled 2,370 points while second-place Lily Zeinstra of Byron Center earned 2,313. Plymouth Salem's Madison Morson was third with 1,740 points with Indya (1,722) and Summer (1,521) Davis of West Bloomfield rounding out the finalists.

Only BCAM members are permitted to vote and must vote for three candidates. Points awarded on a 5-3-1 basis. Zeinstra had the most first-place votes, 290 to 281 for Reynolds, but Reynolds had 258 second-place votes to 224 for Zeinstra. They each had 191 third-place votes.

Didn't know she had it in her

Reynolds was surprised to find out she won and she tossed and turned most of the night.

"I did not get to bed until 1:30," she said. "I couldn't fall asleep. I kept thinking I ... I did not expect that. I was excited and hoped I got it, obviously. I just didn't know for sure. I knew every girl that I was competing with I knew they were really, really good competitors. I didn't know who was going to get it."

A signee with George Washington, Reynolds understands this award doesn't guarantee future stardom, but is a reflection of what she has done in high school, averaging 29.9 points, 3.9 rebounds and 3.9 assists.

"Awards don't say everything about a person, but it shows how hard you work and how great a basketball player you are," she said. "I've never been too concerned about it, but when I first found out about it three years ago I really wanted to get to that level to know that I am really good basketball player and I think that's what it shows."

When asked, most parents of Miss Basketball winners say they could tell from an early age that their daughter could be in the running for this award. Not so with Keith Reynolds.

“That’s a hard question because of Gabb’s journey,” he said. “I think, probably it was real late in the game. Gabb’s always been competitive, she’s always aspired to be the best at what she tries to do.”

Reynolds is one of six children. She is No. 4 after two older sisters and an older brother.



“My first and second daughters were not into sports at all,” Keith said. “So when Gabb was young and started saying will you teach me to do some basketball, I told her she wasn’t really interested in it.”

Unbeknownst to her father, Gabby did not listen to him, which he discovered a few years later.

“One day, I walked in the gym and saw her doing some sophisticated dribbling and she was 10,” he said. “I told myself I didn’t want to be the dad that goes down in her mind as indifferent or disengaged.”

Keith, who played college football, still didn’t take it too seriously until his daughter played AAU for the first time as a freshman in high school.

“That first live period, she was creating a buzz with her play,” he said. “After the very first live period our phone started blowing up and she got her very first Division I offer.”

Chapman first spotted Reynolds at his camp when she was in middle school. Back then, her dreams exceeded her talent level.

But her enthusiasm for the game was unparalleled.

“She was a kid that literally loved basketball and she talked about playing in college someday,” he said. “You hear a middle school kid talking like that you say: ‘Yeah, good dream.’ “

She soon began improving at a steady pace and by the time she reached high school her dream to play college basketball didn't seem so farfetched.

"She plays with more force than most girls do; she's really strong," Chapman said. "She really goes hard to the basket. She's able to get her shot off with contact. I've been coaching boys and girls for over 40 years and she works harder than anybody I've ever had. The other day before we left for the game, she was shooting for 45 minutes.

"She's very skilled because she's worked on her game."

Summer growth spurt

Reynolds' improvement has been steady, but it took off last spring and summer.

"Honestly, I think the biggest leap was from my junior year to my senior year," she said. "I've played a lot more aggressive. I think my mentality has really changed this year. It's not about my stats or anything, but doing what I need to do to get my team to win."

West Ottawa is 20-6 and has a quarterfinal game against defending Division 1 state champ Rockford at Grandville at 7 p.m. Tuesday. She has gotten much done to help the Panthers win.

Part of that may be due to her now wearing jersey No. 1, like she wanted to back as a freshman.



"I wanted that for the same reason that my coach was telling me after he switched me to No. 1, that if you're No. 1 you have to play like you're No. 1," she said. "I want to play like I'm the best player on the court.

"That's not supposed to be in an arrogant way, but I always want to play to the best of my abilities. That's what the No. 1 stands for to me."

And being Miss Basketball stands for something else to Reynolds, something much bigger than just her.

“For the most part I think it will change the influence I have over little kids,” she said. “I think that’s one of the things I’m most proud of. Once little girls in this area that dream about playing basketball can see that another girls from Ottawa County area, it will really change perspective and help little girls.”

Mick McCabe is a former longtime columnist for the Detroit Free Press. Contact him at mick.mccabe11@gmail.com. Follow him [@mickmccabe1](https://www.instagram.com/mickmccabe1). Save 10% on his new book, “Mick McCabe’s Golden Yearbook: 50 Great Years of Michigan’s Best High School Players, Teams & Memories,” by ordering right now at McCabe.PictorialBook.com.

The voting

Here are the results of the 43rd annual Mick McCabe Miss Basketball award, given by the Basketball Coaches Association of Michigan. Only BCAM members are permitted to vote.

1. Gabby Reynolds. Holland West Ottawa: 2,370 points
2. Lily Zeinstra, Byron Center: 2,313 points
3. Madison Morson, Plymouth Salem: 1,740 points
4. Indya Davis, West Bloomfield: 1,722 points
5. Summer Davis, West Bloomfield: 1,521 points

Votes are awarded on a 5-3-1 basis; 1,074 votes cast.

The winners

Here are the 42 winners of the Mick McCabe Miss Basketball Award:

2023 Macy Brown, East Grand Rapids (Michigan)

2022 Ruby Whitehorn, Detroit Edison (Clemson)

2021 Damiya Hagemann, Detroit Edison (Michigan State)

2020 Gabrielle Elliott, Detroit Edison (Clemson)

2019 Rickea Jackson, Detroit Edison (Mississippi State)

2018 Jaida Hampton, East Lansing (Wichita State)

2017 Jordan Walker, Muskegon Mona Shores (Western Michigan)

2016 Kysre Gondrezick, Benton Harbor (Michigan, West Virginia)

2015 Tania Davis, Goodrich (Iowa)

2014 Lexi Gussert, Crystal Falls Forrest Park (Michigan State)

2013 Tori Jankoska, Freeland (Michigan State)

2012 Madison Ristovski, GPW University Liggett (Michigan)

2011 Jasmine Hines, Central Lake (Michigan State)

2010 Klarissa Bell, East Lansing (Michigan State)

2009 Jenny Ryan, Saginaw Nouvel (Michigan)

2008 Kellie Watson, Ionia (Notre Dame/Grand Valley State)

2006 Brenna Banktson, Frankfort (Western Michigan)

2005 Allyssa DeHaan, Grandville (Michigan State)

2004 Tiffanie Shives, Lansing Christian (Michigan State/Gonzaga)

2003 Krista Clement, St. Ignace (Michigan)

2002 Danielle Kamm, Saginaw Nouvel (Marquette)

2001 Liz Shimek, Maple City Glen Lake (Michigan State)

2000 Tabitha Pool, Ann Arbor Huron (Michigan)

1999 Vicki Krapohl, Mount Pleasant (Duke)

1998 Kristen Koetsier, Grandville (Western Michigan)

1997 Aiysha Smith, Redford Bishop Borgess (St. Johns/LSU)

1996 Deana Nolan, Flint Northern (Georgia)

1995 Maxann Reese, Redford Bishop Borgess (Michigan State)

1994 Kim Knuth, St. Joseph (Toledo)

1993 Sally Sedlar, Manistee (Toledo/Central Michigan)

1992 Erinn Reed, Saginaw (Iowa/Kansas)

1991 Lisa Negri, Flint Powers (Ohio State)

1990 Markita Aldridge, Detroit King (UNC-Charlotte)

1989 Peggy Evans, Birmingham Detroit Country Day (Tennessee/Ohio State)

1988 Jennifer Shasky, Birmingham Marian (George Washington)

1987 Dena Head, Plymouth Salem (Tennessee)

1986 Daedra Charles, Detroit DePorres (Tennessee)

1985 Franthea Price, River Rouge (Iowa)

1984 Emily Wagner, Livonia Ladywood (Stanford)

1983 Michele Kruty, Manistee (Dayton)

1982 Sue Tucker, Okemos (Michigan State)

1981 Julie Polakowski, Leland (Michigan State)