



Elks Hoop Shoot

News Release

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For immediate release

Hancock County Girl is One of the Best Free Throw Shooters in the Nation

CHICAGO—Kayla Stidham is going to the Hall of Fame! Sponsored by Greenfield, Ind., Lodge No. 1720, Kalya won the 10- to 11- year old girls division at the National Finals of the Elks Hoop Shoot free throw tournament. The Finals took place virtually throughout April and officially concluded on May 14, closing the book on the longest season in the program's history. Kayla was one of 72 National Finalists who vied for national titles in girls and boys divisions across three age-groups. She's the daughter of 1993 Hoop Shoot National Champion Lisa Shepherd and the niece of 1985 Hoop Shoot National Champion Stacie Shepherd.

Kayla shot 24 out of 25 baskets to defeat 11 other participants. Like the other Finalists, she advanced through four rounds of competition to reach the National Finals. More than 235,000 8- to 13-year-olds started down the road to the Finals in the fall of 2019. Slated to take place April 18, 2020, the national finals were canceled in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. More than a year later, youth across the country competed virtually, shooting in regional pods. The Elks revealed the contest scores in a virtual celebration. All six champions will have their names and images displayed in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., and will visit the Hall as guests of the Elks when it's safe to do so.

Funded by the Elks National Foundation, the Hoop Shoot has been developing gritty kids for nearly 50 years. The keynote speaker at the Awards Banquet, held virtually, was former NFL player Israel Idonije. Notable alumni from the Hoop Shoot program include college coaches Chris Mullin and Steve Alford, and WNBA players Jackie Stiles, Kristi Toliver, Karlie Samuelson and Seimone Augustus.

The Elks organization is headquartered in Chicago, which will host the Hoop Shoot National Finals next year. The 2022 National Finals mark the 50th anniversary of the program. The Elks will host a gold medal finals for the Hoop Shoot's golden anniversary at the brand-new, state-of-the-art Wintrust Arena, home of the WNBA's Chicago Sky and the DePaul University Blue Demons.

The complete results from this year's Hoop Shoot are available at elks.org/hoopshoot. You can watch the virtual conclusion on the ENF's YouTube channel by visiting enf.elks.org/2020FinalsReveal.

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