



7DAYS EuroCup Rising Star Trophy: Khalifa Diop, Gran Canaria

Euroleague Basketball is pleased to announce that Khalifa Diop of Gran Canaria has been chosen as the 7DAYS EuroCup Rising Star Trophy winner for the 2021-22 season. Diop was voted by EuroCup coaches to win the award after helping the team win Group B of the regular season with a 12-6 record and reach the EuroCup Quarterfinals.

The EuroCup Rising Star Trophy recognizes the most outstanding player in the competition who was younger than 22 years of age on July 1 of the summer before the season started. Diop, who turned 20 in January, was a fixture on weekly highlight reels with his electric dunks and show-stopping blocked shots. Diop ranked second among Rising Star eligible players with 16 blocks. The 2.08-meter center also finished third among them with 30 offensive rebounds, fifth in total rebounds (78) and eighth in both points (114) and PIR (149).

The Rising Star Trophy is among the awards given in recognition of the EuroCup's finest each season for their efforts on the basketball court. Diop finished first in a close race in which Jaime Pradilla of Valencia Basket and Joel Parra of Joventut Badalona were tied behind him for second place in the voting. The head coaches had previously chosen one of their peers, **Dusan Alimpijevic** of competition finalist Frutti Extra Bursaspor, as this season's EuroCup Coach of the Year. The All-7DAYS EuroCup teams and the season's MVP, for whom fans, team captains and media also voted, will be announced before Bursaspor visits Virtus Segafredo Bologna in the 7DAYS EuroCup Final on Wednesday, May 11.

In his second EuroCup season, Diop came off the bench for Gran Canaria in all but four of his 20 appearances this season, averaging 15:26 minutes per game. In the games when he spent more than 15 minutes on the floor, he posted 7.2 points and 4.6 rebounds per game for an average PIR of 12.6. He posted career

high of 18 points and 9 rebounds vs. eventual semifinalist Valencia Basket and registered a career-high of 3 blocks in three different games. He finished this campaign averaging 5.7 points on 58.2% two-point shooting to go with 3.9 rebounds and 1.0 assists.

A native of Senegal, Diop joined Gran Canaria as a teenager. He played in its youth categories and the club's second team in the Spanish lower divisions before making his professional debut during the 2018-19 season. He split time between Gran Canaria and its second team until the 2020-21 campaign, which was Diop's first full professional season.

This is the second consecutive season that a Gran Canaria player has been voted the EuroCup Rising Star, after Aleksander Balcerowski won the award last season. The list of Rising Star trophy winners also includes Milan Macvan of Hemofarm Vrsac in 2009, Victor Claver of Power Electronics Valencia in 2010, Donatas Motiejunas of Benetton Treviso in 2011, Jonas Valanciunas of Lietuvos Rytas in 2012, two-time winner Bojan Dubljevic of Valencia Basket in 2013 and 2014, Kristaps Porzingis of Baloncesto Seville in 2015, Mateusz Ponitka of Stelmet Zielona Gora in 2016, Rolands Smits of Montakit Fuenlabrada in 2017, Dzan Musa of Cedevita Zagreb in 2018, and Martynas Echodas of Rytas Vilnius in 2019.



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Contact Us

Press office: mediacommunication@euroleague.net Phone: 34 933 278 427

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