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**FORT MYERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® FLORIDA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Destanni Henderson of Fort Myers High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Henderson is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fort Myers High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Henderson as Florida's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Henderson joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-9 senior point guard led the Green Wave to a 14-15 record and the Class 7A state championship this past season, the team's third straight state title. Henderson averaged 15.2 points, 6.1 assists, 5.3 rebounds and 3.3 steals per game for Fort Myers, which had to forfeit 11 victories this season because of an ineligible player. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, Henderson was a member of the USA Basketball Under-17 Women's National Team that won a bronze medal at the 2016 World Championships. Rated as the nation's No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2018 by espnW, she concluded her prep basketball career with 1,649 points.

Henderson has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach. "Destanni has been amazing—her control of the game is at another level," said Arthur Cedeno, head coach of Lehigh High. "She is really mentally tough and is what makes Fort Myers so tough to beat. She is their leader and their motor."

Henderson has maintained a weighted 3.80 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina beginning this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Henderson joins recent Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Players of the Year RENNIA DAVIS (2016-17, Ribault High School), JAZMINE JONES (2015-16, FAMU Developmental Research School), BEATRICE MOMPREMIER (2014-15 & 2013-14, Miami Senior High School), IESHIA SMALL (2012-13, Florida State University School), ALEXIS PRINCE (2011-12, Edgewater High School), AMBER HENSON (2010-11, Sickles High School), DAWN MAYE (2009-10, Dillard High School), ASHLEY JONES (2008-09, Lake Howell High School), TIFFANY HAYES (2007-08, Winter Haven High School), and KRISTAL THOMAS (2006-07, The First Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Destanni will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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