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**IOWA CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® IOWA 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 Ashley Joens of Iowa City High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Joens is the second Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Iowa City 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 Joens as Iowa'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, Joens 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 6-foot senior guard led the Little Hawks to a 25-1 record and the Class 5A state final this past season. Joens averaged 30.9 points, 11.8 rebounds, 3.1 assists, 3.3 steals and 1.7 blocks per game while shooting 61.9 percent from the field and 61.2 percent from behind the 3-point arc. The Iowa Press Sports Writers Association's 2018 Iowa Miss Basketball and a Jordan Brand Classic selection, Joens is rated as the nation's No. 19 recruit in the Class of 2018 by espnW.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Joens has volunteered locally at Grant Wood Elementary and has served as a coach at youth basketball camps. "Ashley is by far in my opinion the best player in our state," said BJ Mayer, head coach at Iowa City West High. "She can do everything. She has improved her shooting, ball handling and defense. She has also done it by having two or three players around her at almost all times. In my opinion, she is the best player in the state and I don't feel it's close."

Joens has maintained a 3.69 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball at Iowa State University 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.

Joens joins recent Gatorade Iowa Girls Basketball Players of the Year Elle Ruffridge (2016-17 & 2015-16, Pocahontas Area High School), Audrey Faber (2014-15, Dowling Catholic High School), Haley Lorenzen (2013-14, City High School), Ally Disterhoft (2012-13, Iowa City West High School), Maddie Manning (2011-12, Ankeny High School), Kiah Stokes (2010-11 & 2009-10, Linn-Mar High School), Jaime Printy (2008-09, Linn-Mar High School), Kelly Krei (2007-08, City High School), and Kelsey Bolte (2006-07, Battle Creek-Ida Grove High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ashley 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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