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**DETROIT EDISON PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® MICHIGAN GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Rickea Jackson of Detroit Edison Public School Academy as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Jackson is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Detroit Edison Public School Academy.

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 Jackson as Michigan'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, Jackson 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-3 junior wing had led the Pioneers to a 21-1 record and the Class C state quarterfinals at the time of her selection. Jackson averaged 21.9 points, 10.8 rebounds, 4.5 assists, 2.3 steals and 1.6 blocks through 22 games. A two-time Associated Press All-State selection and Michigan's No. 1 preseason player as named by the Detroit Free Press, Jackson is rated as the nation's No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2019 by espnW.

Jackson has volunteered locally with the Brown Bag Project, where she is a student leader who helps to organize and provide meals to the homeless. "I believe Rickea Jackson is the best overall girls basketball player in the state," said Jeff Hachigian, head coach at Henry Ford Academy. "She has a dynamic game, being able to score inside and outside. Also, with her size and athleticism she can cover all five positions on the court defensively, which makes her a matchup nightmare."

Jackson has maintained a 3.02 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school in the 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.

Jackson joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kierra Fletcher (2016-17, Cousino High School), Kysre Gondrezick (2015-16, Benton Harbor High School), Cierra Rice (2014-15, Grosse Pointe South High School), Lexi Gussert (2013-14, Forest Park High School), Tori Jankoska (2012-13, Freeland High School), Madison Ristovski (2011-12, University Liggett School), Jasmine Hines (2010-11, Central Lake High School), Madison Williams (2009-10, Detroit Country Day School), Destiny Williams (2008-09, Benton Harbor High School), Kellie Watson (2007-08, Ionia High School), and Keshia Hines (2006-07, Avondale High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Rickea 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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