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**HOLMES COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI 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 Destiny Haymer of Holmes County Central High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Haymer is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Holmes County Central 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 Haymer as Mississippi'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, Haymer 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-8 senior guard led the Jaguars to a 26-7 record and the Class 5A quarterfinals this past season. Haymer averaged 16.9 points, 7.3 rebounds, 3.4 assists and 4.8 steals per game. A 2017-18 Clarion-Ledger Dandy Dozen selection, Haymer is a four-time All-District selection who concluded her prep career with 10 triple-doubles and one quadruple-double.

An active member of Tchula Church of Christ, Haymer has donated her time to serenading and spending time with the elderly at local nursing homes as well as tutoring youngsters at the Boys and Girls Club. "I definitely nominate Destiny Haymer," said Tangela Banks, head coach of Class 6A state finalist Murrah High. "She is an awesome point guard who can score."

Haymer has maintained a 3.86 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball at Jones County Junior College 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.

Haymer joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Players of the Year Myah Taylor (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Olive Branch High School), Victoria Vivians (2013-14, Scott Central High School), Christa Reed (2012-13, Bay High School), Victoria Vivians (2011-12, Scott Central High School), Krista Donald (2010-11, Lake High School), Valencia McFarland (2009-10 & 2008-09, Raymond High School), and April Sykes (2007-08 & 2006-07, East Oktibbeha County High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Destiny 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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