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**NORTH AUGUSTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Amari Young of North Augusta High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Young is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Augusta 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 Young as South Carolina'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, Young 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 forward led the Yellow Jackets to a 26-1 record and a second straight Class AAAA state championship this past season. Young averaged 16.9 points, 10.3 rebounds, 3.4 assists and 6.0 steals per game. A three-time All-State honoree who earned her second straight Class AAAA Player of the Year selection, Young had 13 points, 17 rebounds and four steals in the state championship game. She concluded her prep career with 2,067 points.

Young has volunteered locally with the Girl Scouts of America and with the Jenkins Memorial CME Church's Christian Youth Fellowship, through which she has collected socks for senior citizens in nursing homes. She has also donated her time mentoring students at North Augusta Elementary School. "Amari is an outstanding player, and an outstanding individual off the court," said CaraLynn Williams, head coach at South Aiken High. "I really didn't think she could get any better coming into this year, and then she was even better this year."

Young has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball at Virginia's Old Dominion 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.

Young joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jaelynn Murray (2016-17, Dreher High School), Jhileiya Dunlap (2015-16, Dreher High School), Kionna Jeter (2014-15, Spartanburg High School), A'ja Wilson (2013-14, Heathwood Hall Episcopal School), Alaina Coates (2012-13, Dutch Fork High School), Asia Dozier (2011-12, Spring Valley High School), Xylina McDaniel (2010-11, Spring Valley High School), Kayla Jenerette (2009-10, Travelers Rest High School), and Morgan Stroman (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Lower Richland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Amari 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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