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**SMYRNA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® DELAWARE GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 11, 2010) — In its 25<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Betnijah Laney of Smyrna High School as its 2009-10 Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Laney is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Smyrna 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 court, distinguishes Laney as Delaware'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, Laney joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.)

At the time of her selection, the 6-foot junior had led the Eagles to a 20-2 record. Entering Wednesday's state semifinal with Cape Henlopen, Laney boasted averages of 22.0 points, 11.8 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 2.2 steals per game. A member of the 2009 USA Basketball Women's U16 National Team, Laney was also a First Team All-State selection in 2009.

Laney has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs as well as a fundraising campaign to benefit cancer research.

"The game is so easy for her," said Kristin Caldwell of Caravel Academy. "She scores a lot of points, but nothing she does is forced. She lets the game come to her and makes good decisions."

Laney will begin her senior year of high school 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Laney joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Players of the Year Dara Taylor (2008-09, Caravel Academy), Elena Delle Donne (2007-08, Ursuline Academy), and Khadijah Rushdan (2006-07, St. Elizabeth) among the state's list of former award winners.

To celebrate the award's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Gatorade wants you to vote for the All-Time Greatest Players of the Year at [gatorade.com/POY25](http://gatorade.com/POY25). To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. 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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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