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**LAWRENCE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MAINE GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 10, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Nia Irving of Lawrence High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Irving is the second Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lawrence 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 Irving as Maine'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, Irving 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.).

The 6-foot-1 senior center averaged 25.6 points and 21.1 rebounds per game while shooting 57 percent from inside the arc this past season, leading the Bulldogs (21-1) to the Class A state championship game. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year and a finalist for Maine's Miss Basketball award, Irving collected 1,761 points and 1,206 rebounds in her prep career and is a four-time Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference Player of the Year.

Irving has maintained a 100.7 weighted average in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a homeless shelter, as a peer tutor and as a youth basketball coach.

"The hard work and commitment Nia Irving has made to her game has been incredible," said Tim Scott, head coach at Hampden Academy. "She has become a very hard-working and special teammate for the Lawrence team. She has deserved all the accolades that have come her way. She is not only a great player but also a highly respected opponent. She plays the game the right way."

Irving has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Boston University 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Two-time winner Irving joins Gatorade Maine Girls Basketball Players of the Allie Clement (2013-14 & 2012-13, Catherine McAuley High School), Meghan Gribbin (2011-12, Windham High School), Niki Taylor (2010-11, York High School), Nicole Taylor (2009-10, York High School), Morgan Frame (2008-09, Waterville High School), Rachael Mack (2007-08, Cony High School), and Ashley Cimino (2006-07, Catherine McAuley High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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