

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)**

**OLIVE BRANCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI 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 Myah Taylor of Olive Branch High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Taylor is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Olive Branch 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 Taylor 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, Taylor 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 5-foot-7 junior point guard averaged 27.1 points, 7.1 assists and 5.9 steals per game this past season, leading the Conquistadors (27-3) to the second round of the Class 6A state tournament. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year and a 2015-16 Clarion Ledger Dandy Dozen selection, Taylor is the nation's No. 41 recruit in the Class of 2017 as rated by ESPN HoopGurlz.

Taylor has maintained a 97.1 average in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and a devoted parishioner in her church community, she has delivered holiday gift baskets to families in need and has volunteered locally as a Sunday School teacher in addition to donating her time as youth basketball coach.

"Myah Taylor is by far the best female basketball player that I've seen this season," said Tameika Brown, head coach at Velma Jackson High. "She is very skilled in all aspects of the game and she is also an unselfish player. She also exhibits sportsmanship and leadership on and off the court."

Taylor 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 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 Taylor joins Gatorade Mississippi Girls Basketball Players of the Year Victoria Vivians (2013-14 & 2011-12, Scott Central High School), Christa Reed (2012-13, Bay 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.

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).

###