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**COUSINO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® MICHIGAN GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kierra Fletcher of Cousino High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Fletcher is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cousino 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 Fletcher as Michigan'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, Fletcher 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-9 senior guard had led the Patriots to a 20-2 record and a berth in the Class A regional final at the time of her selection. Fletcher averaged 21.8 points, 10.4 rebounds and 5.6 assists per game while shooting 62 percent from inside the arc through 22 games. A statewide Miss Basketball finalist, she is ranked as the nation's No. 51 recruit of 2017 by espnW HoopGurlz.

Fletcher has volunteered locally on behalf of her school's peer leadership organization, the Adopt A Family program and as a youth basketball coach. "Kierra Fletcher has a great work ethic, is an outstanding competitor, an awesome teammate and a top-notch student," said Gary Bennett, head coach of Grosse Pointe North High. "She works equally hard at both ends of the floor. Most people may think of her as a scorer, but she is a complete disruptive force on defense. She has totally earned my highest respect as a student-athlete and competitor."

Fletcher has maintained a 3.69 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Georgia Tech 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 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.

Fletcher joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kysre Gondrezick (2015-16, Benton Harbor High School), Cierra Rice (2014-15, Grosse Pointe South High School), Lexi Gussert (2013-14, Forest Park High School), Tori Jankoska (2012-13, Freeland High School), Madison Ristovski (2011-12, University Liggett School), Jasmine Hines (2010-11, Central Lake High School), Madison Williams (2009-10, Detroit Country Day School), Destiny Williams (2008-09, Benton Harbor High School), Kellie Watson (2007-08, Ionia High School), and Keshia Hines (2006-07, Avondale High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kierra 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 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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