

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**WESLEYAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® GEORGIA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Mikayla Coombs of Wesleyan School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Coombs is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wesleyan 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 Coombs as Georgia'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, Coombs 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-10 senior guard had led the Wolves to a 27-4 record and a berth in the Class A Private School state tournament championship game at the time of her selection. Coombs averaged 16.8 points, 6.9 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 4.4 steals through 31 games. The 2016 Class 2A Player of the Year, Coombs is a McDonald's All-American Game honoree and a three-time member of the Gwinnett Daily Post's Super Six team. She entered the state final with 1,314 points in her prep basketball career.

A designated school ambassador, Coombs has also volunteered locally with Students Adventuring Life Without Substance Abuse (SALSA). "Mikayla is the total package," said Nichole Dixon, head coach of Holy Innocents Episcopal School. "Players of her caliber don't always have the maturity to still be the best player on the court while being a great teammate. Mikayla elevates the level of her team."

Coombs has maintained a weighted A-minus average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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.

Coombs joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jenna Staiti (2015-16, West Forsyth High School), Asia Durr (2014-15 & 2013-14, St. Pius X Catholic High School), Lexie Brown (2012-13, North Gwinnett High School), Allisha Gray (2011-12, Washington County High School), Diamond DeShields (2010-11, Norcross High School), Kayla Lewis (2009-10, Southwest DeKalb High School), Anne Marie Armstrong (2008-09, Wesleyan School), Alicia Manning (2007-08, Etowah High School), and Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Mikayla 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.

###