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**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312) 729-3685**

**GATORADE® NATIONAL GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:  
CHRISTYN WILLIAMS**

*2015 WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne Surprises Winner with Honor*

Little Rock, Ark. (March 24, 2018) - In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Christyn Williams of Central Arkansas Christian School (North Little Rock, Ark.) as its 2017-18 Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Washington Mystics forward and 2015 WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne surprised Williams with the award during a morning workout.

Check out the surprise video [here](#).

"It was exciting for me to be able to surprise Christyn with the Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award, especially because she is such a deserving student-athlete," said Delle Donne. "Christyn is a well-rounded individual who has already accomplished so much on and off the court, so it's an honor for me to welcome her into the prestigious Gatorade Player of the Year family, and I'm looking forward to following her career at UConn and beyond."

The award recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select her from 430,000 high school girls basketball players nationwide. Williams is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Female High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 5-foot-11 senior guard led the Mustangs to a 36-1 record and the Class 4A state championship this past season. The state's two-time returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Williams averaged 26.8 points, 10.4 rebounds, 2.9 assists and 1.8 steals per game. A member of the USA Basketball Women's U19 National Team, she is a four-time All-State honoree and is ranked as the nation's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2018 by espnW. Also the Women's Basketball Coaches Association High School Player of the Year, the Naismith Trophy High School Player of the Year, and Morgan Wootten Player of the Year, she has been chosen to play in both the McDonald's All-American Game and the Jordan Brand Classic.

Williams has raised money to benefit the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Arkansas Dream Center, Autism Awareness Camp and youth basketball programs.

"Christyn Williams is an athletic, strong, ambidextrous guard who is college-ready and a three-level scorer," says Bret McCormick, publisher of the All-Star Girls Report. "She has a high motor and plays with equal intensity on both sides of

the ball. I believe she has a chance to start as a freshman at UConn. More than that, she's a future WNBA star in my view."

Williams has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Connecticut beginning this fall.

"Christyn is an excellent student-athlete who has earned recognition as the nation's best high school girls basketball player while also excelling in the classroom and making a difference in her community," said Gatorade Senior Vice President and General Manager Brett O'Brien. "Christyn's statistics on the court speak for themselves, but even more impressive is the example she sets for younger student-athletes and the impact she has had on her teammates. Christyn represents everything we look to celebrate in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient."

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Williams also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for her organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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 sports leadership team in partnership with 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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- 2015 NBA first overall pick Karl-Anthony Towns
- Three-time WNBA champion Maya Moore
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Three-time Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at [PlayeroftheYear.Gatorade.com](http://PlayeroftheYear.Gatorade.com) on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

**ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR**

YEAR	NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	STATUS
2017-18	Christyn Williams	Central Arkansas Christian School, Little Rock, AR	High School Senior
2016-17	Megan Walker	Monacan, North Chesterfield, VA	University of Connecticut
2015-16	Erin Boley	Elizabethtown, Elizabethtown, KY	University of Oregon
2014-15	Katie Lou Samuelson	Mater Dei, Santa Ana, CA	University of Connecticut
2013-14	Brianna Turner	Manvel, Manvel, TX	Notre Dame
2012-13	Mercedes Russell	Springfield, Springfield, OR	University of Tennessee
2011-12	Breanna Stewart	Cicero-North Syracuse, Cicero, NY	Seattle Storm
2010-11	Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis	Mater Dei, Santa Ana, CA	Seattle Storm
2009-10	Chiney Ogwumike	Cy-Fair, Cypress, TX	Connecticut Sun
2008-09	Skylar Diggins	Washington, South Bend, IN	Dallas Wings
2007-08	Nneka Ogwumike	Cy-Fair, Cypress, TX	Los Angeles Sparks
2006-07	Maya Moore	Collins Hill, Suwanee, GA	Minnesota Lynx
2005-06	Tina Charles	Christ the King, Middle Village, NY	Sichuan Whales (Women's Chinese Basketball Association)
2004-05	Abby Waner	ThunderRidge HS, Highlands Ranch, CO	Retired from WNBA
2003-04	Candace Parker	Naperville Central HS, Naperville, IL	Los Angeles Sparks
2002-03	Candace Parker	Naperville Central HS, Naperville, IL	Los Angeles Sparks
2001-02	Ann Strother	Highlands Ranch, Denver, CO	Retired from WNBA
2000-01	Shyra Ely	Ben Davis, Indianapolis, IN	WNBA Free Agent
1999-00	Shereka Wright	Copperas Cove, Copperas Cove, TX	Univ. of Alabama Staff
1998-99	Nicole Kaczmarek	Sachem North, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY	Retired from WNBA
1997-98	Tamika Williams	Chaminade-Julienne, Dayton, OH	Penn State Univ. Staff
1996-97	Nikki Teasley	St. John's at Prospect Hall, Frederick, MD	Retired from WNBA
1995-96	Jaime Walz	Highlands, Ft. Thomas, KY	Highlands (Ky.) H.S. Coach
1994-95	Stephanie White	Seeger, West Lebanon, IN	Vanderbilt Univ. Coach
1993-94	Monick Foote	Samford, Wilmington, DE	Retired Pro
1992-93	La'Keshia Frett	Phoebus, Hampton, VA	Univ. of Virginia Coach Staff
1991-92	Katie Smith	Logan, Logan, OH	Retired from WNBA
1990-91	Michelle Marciniak	Central Catholic, Allentown, PA	Retired from WNBA
1989-90	Lisa Leslie	Morningside, Inglewood, CA	Retired from WNBA
1988-89	Lisa Harrison	Southern, Louisville, KY	Retired from WNBA
1987-88	Vicki Hall	Brebeuf Prep, Indianapolis, IN	Univ. of Toledo Coach Staff
1986-87	Kris Durham	Union Catholic, Scotch Plains, NJ	Seton Hall Univ. Grad
1985-86	Susan Anderson	Mt. Baker, Deming, WA	Univ. of Texas Grad

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