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**MANASQUAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 19, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Dara Mabrey of Manasquan High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Mabrey became the third Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Manasquan High School when she won the 2016-17 award.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Mabrey as New Jersey'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, Mabrey 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-7 senior guard had led the Warriors to a 30-2 record, the Group 2 state championship and a berth in the Tournament of Champions at the time of her selection. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Mabrey averaged 22.6 points, 4.6 assists, 4.6 rebounds and 2.9 steals through 32 games. The Shore Conference Player of the Year, she is a two-time All-State honoree and was selected as the USA TODAY's ALL-USA New Jersey Player of the Year as a junior.

Mabrey has volunteered locally on behalf of a nursery school, food donation drives and youth basketball programs. "Mabrey has two qualities that separate her," said Mike Lazur, head coach at Ocean Township High. "First is the incredible intensity with which she plays, both offensively and defensively. Second is her ability to get better in the biggest moments and the biggest games."

Mabrey has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Virginia Tech 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.

Two-time winner Mabrey joins Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jocelyn Willoughby (2015-16, Newark Academy), Marina Mabrey (2014-15, Manasquan High School), Taylor Rooks (2013-14 & 2012-13, Gill St. Bernard's School), Michaela Mabrey (2011-12, Manasquan High School), Temi Fagbenle (2010-11, Blair Academy), Haley Peters (2009-10, Peddie School), Laurin Mincy (2008-09, University High School), Lakeisha Sutton (2007-08, Trenton Catholic Academy), and Tayler Wejnert (2006-07, Academy of the Holy Angels) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Dara 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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