

WALKER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE LOUISIANA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 8, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Tiara Young of Walker High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Young is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Walker 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 field, distinguishes Young as Louisiana's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Young joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Maya Moore (2005-06, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville High School, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, 2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo High School, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis High School, Ind.), Katie Smith (1991-92, Logan High School, Ohio) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-10 senior guard and forward averaged 29.3 points, 6.9 rebounds, 3.1 steals, 1.9 assists and 1.1 blocks per game this past season, leading the Wildcats (32-5) to the Class 5A state semifinals. A transfer from Evangel Christian Academy, Young was the 2018 Louisiana High School Basketball Coaches Association Player of the Year. She concluded her six-year varsity prep basketball career that began in middle school with 4,372 points.

Young has volunteered locally as a youth basketball coach, and she has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Tiara is a phenomenal player," said Blake Zito, head coach of Denham Springs High School. "By far she has been the toughest to game-plan for this season. She has no weaknesses to her game—she can defend, she is athletic, she can handle the ball and she can score from anywhere on the court."

Young has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Louisiana State University 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Young joins Gatorade Louisiana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kourtney Weber (2017-18, Ursuline Academy), Cara Ursin (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Destrehan High School), and Kalani Brown (2013-14, Salmen High School) as athletes who have won the basketball award.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Young 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 submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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