

**DETROIT EDISON PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE  
NAMED  
GATORADE MICHIGAN GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (March 8, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Rickea Jackson of Detroit Edison Public School Academy** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Jackson is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Detroit Edison Public School Academy.

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 Jackson as Michigan'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, Jackson 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-3 senior wing had led the Pioneers to a 20-1 record and a berth in the Division 2, District 59 Tournament semifinals at the time of her selection. Jackson averaged 22.0 points, 6.5 rebounds, 1.5 steals and 1.3 steals through 21 games. A semifinalist for the Naismith Award, Jackson is a McDonald's All-American Game selection. She entered the postseason with 1,771 points in her prep basketball career.

Jackson has volunteered locally with the Brown Bag Project, which provides lunches for the homeless, and she has donated her time collecting shoes for underprivileged children. "Rickea has a combination of size, athletic ability, skill and court awareness that I have not seen before from a girls basketball player at the high school level," said Steve Eklund, head coach of Pewamo-Westphalia High School. "She has a competitive nature about her that combined with her skill-set is just so overwhelming for any opponent."

Jackson has maintained a weighted 3.19 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Mississippi 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.

Two-time winner Jackson joins Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kierra Fletcher (2016-17, Cousino High School), Kysre Gondrezick (2015-16, Benton Harbor High School), Cierra Rice (2014-15, Grosse Pointe South High School), and Lexi Gussert (2013-14, Forest Park High School) as athletes who have won the basketball award.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Jackson 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), 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).

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