

LONG ISLAND LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Celeste Taylor of Long Island Lutheran High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade New York Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Taylor is the first Gatorade New York Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Long Island Lutheran 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 Taylor as New York'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, Taylor 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-11 senior guard had led the Crusaders to a 15-7 record and a berth in the Federation tournament at the time of her selection. Taylor averaged 16.3 points, 8.3 rebounds, 5.9 assists and 4.0 steals through 22 games. A three-time All-State honoree and three-time Long Island Player of the Year, she was a member of the gold medal winning USA Basketball U17 Women's World Cup Team and has been chosen to play in the McDonald's All-American Game.

Taylor has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army and a youth mentoring program. "Celeste Taylor is a remarkable talent," said Marcus Thompson, head coach at Sanford School (Del.). "She possesses the rare qualities of size, athleticism and a superior basketball IQ. She can score effortlessly and also create for others."

Taylor has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Taylor joins Gatorade New York Girls Basketball Players of the Year Emily Engstler (2017-18, St. Francis Preparatory School), Andra Espinoza-Hunter (2016-17, Ossining High School), Dominique Toussaint (2015-16, Christ the King High School), Lauren Brozoski (2014-15, Long Island Lutheran High School), and Sierra Calhoun (2013-14, Christ the King High School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Taylor 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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