

**E.A. LANEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Saniya Rivers of E.A. Laney High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Rivers is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from E.A. Laney 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 Rivers as North Carolina'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, Rivers 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 sophomore guard had led the Buccaneers to a 28-1 record and the Class 4A quarterfinals at the time of her selection. Rivers averaged 24.8 points, 12.4 rebounds, 4.5 steals and 4.1 assists through 29 games. The Mideastern Conference Player of the Year, she was an All-State selection as a freshman and is ranked as the nation's No. 7 recruit in the Class of 2021 by ESPN.

A devoted member of her church community, Rivers has volunteered locally assisting the elderly. "Saniya Rivers is the best high school basketball player I've ever coached against," said Adrienne Gale, head coach at Ashley High. "Not only does she have the best skills I've seen, but she's also unselfish. She constantly looks for her teammates and makes others around her better."

Rivers has maintained a 3.36 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Rivers joins Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Izabela Nicoletti (2017-18, Neuse Christian Academy), Mikayla Boykin (2016-17, Clinton High School), Erin Whalen (2015-16, Providence Day School), Stephanie Watts (2014-15, Weddington High School), and Jatarie White (2013-14, Providence Day School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

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