

ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 **Leiya Stuart of St. George's School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Stuart is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. George's 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 Stuart as Rhode Island'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, Stuart 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 junior guard averaged 20.8 points, 6.2 rebounds, 2.9 assists, 2.2 steals and 1.0 blocks per game this past season, leading the Dragons (14-8) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class B tournament quarterfinals. A two-time All-NEPSAC Class B All-Star, she is also a two-time First Team All-Independent School League honoree.

Stuart has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects and at the St. George's Summer Camp. She has also donated her time to numerous fundraising campaigns in association with her family's business in Stroudsburg, Pa. "Leiya was asked to do many things on the court and she excelled in all of them," said Billy O'Dwyer, head coach of Thayer Academy. "She is dangerous and had a big impact on her team's success."

Stuart has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Stuart joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Players of the Year Oluchi Ezemma (2017-18 & 2016-17, Moses Brown School), Celia Tomlinson (2015-16, South Kingstown High School), Sarah Middleton (2014-15, Barrington High School), and Taylor Buckley (2013-14, North Kingstown High School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

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