

**SWANSEA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH 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 **Danae McNeal of Swansea High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. McNeal is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Swansea 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 McNeal as South 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, McNeal 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.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-11 senior guard led the Tigers to a 23-3 record and the Class 3A quarterfinals this past season. McNeal averaged 24.5 points, 12.6 rebounds, 4.7 steals, 4.0 assists and 3.4 blocks per game. The three-time Class 3A Player of the Year, she is also a four-time All-State selection.

McNeal has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth sports programs. "Danae McNeal plays at a very high level," said Lonnie Roberts, head coach at Bluffton High. "She's long, tall and very athletic. She's got a great inside-outside game, and her basketball IQ is very high. She makes everyone around her better."

McNeal has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Clemson University 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.

McNeal joins Gatorade South Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Amari Young (2017-18, North Augusta High School), Jaelynn Murray (2016-17, Dreher High School), Jhileiya Dunlap (2015-16, Dreher High School), Kionna Jeter (2014-15, Spartanburg High School), and A'ja Wilson (2013-14, Heathwood Hall Episcopal School) as athletes who have recently won the basketball award.

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