

**SANDIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 27, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Viane Cumber of Sandia High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Cumber is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sandia 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 Cumber as New Mexico'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 June, Cumber joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Skylar Diggins-Smith (2008-09, Washington High School, Ind.), Nneka Ogwumike (2007-08, Cy-Fair High School, Texas), Maya Moore (2006-07, Collins Hill High School, Ga.), Candace Parker (2002-03 & 2003-04, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), and Lisa Leslie (1989-90, Morningside High School, Calif.).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior guard averaged 26.5 points, 9.3 rebounds, 2.2 assists and 1.5 steals this past season in leading the Matadors to a 7-4 record and the Class 5A quarterfinals. The 2020-21 MaxPreps New Mexico High School Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Cumber was also a two-time First-Team All-Metro selection and a two-time District Player of the Year.

A National Honor Society member, Cumber has volunteered locally with the Festival of Trees, which raises money for children with physical challenges, and she has helped distribute groceries to low-income families on behalf of the Palo Duro Senior Center. Cumber has also donated her time as a youth servant at the Calvary Church and as a youth basketball coach. "Viane is, hands down, the best our state has to offer," said Bree Rose, head coach at St. Pius X High and a former two-time Gatorade Player of the Year winner at Rio Rancho High. "Yes, because of basketball and how she represents herself on the court, but she's also a kid who gives back. She's one of a kind as far as I'm concerned."

Cumber has maintained a weighted 4.09 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of New Mexico 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Cumber joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Players of the Year Carsyn Boswell (2018-19, Carlsbad High School), Amaya Brown (2017-18, Cibola High School), and Jaedyn De La Cerda (2016-17, Roswell High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Cumber has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Cumber is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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