

**AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 9, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ta'Niya Latson** of **American Heritage School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Latson is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from American Heritage 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 court, distinguishes Latson as Florida'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, Latson 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, CyFair 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 5-foot-9 senior guard led the Patriots to a 25-4 record and a fifth-straight Class 5A state championship this past season. Latson averaged 27.2 points, 8.0 rebounds, 7.0 assists, 5.3 steals and 2.0 blocks per game and she recorded 24 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists in American Heritage's 69-31 win over Bishop Moore High in the state final. A McDonald's All-American Game selection, she won two state titles at Westlake (Ga.) High before moving to Florida for her senior year of high school.

Latson has volunteered as a youth mentor and basketball coach. "Ta'Niya Latson is a rare player," said Anthony Jones, head coach of Dr. Phillips High School. "Ta'Niya can guard all five positions because of her incredible athleticism, vertical jumping, explosive speed and great ball-handling. She can score in any manner and defend anyone."

Latson has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Florida State 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Latson joins recent Gatorade Florida Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kendal Cheesman (2020-21, H.B. Plant High School), O'Mariah Gordon (2019-20 & 2018-19, Braden River High School), and Destanni Henderson (2017-18, Fort Myers High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the court. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Latson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Latson is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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