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DESERT VISTA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (March 14, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Wrenwyck "Shay" Ijiwoye** of **Desert Vista High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year**. Ijiwoye is the second Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Desert Vista High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the court, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Ijiwoye as Arizona's best high school girls basketball player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Candace Parker (2003-04, 2002-03 & 2001-02, Naperville Central High School, Ill.), Paige Bueckers (2017-18, Hopkins High School, Minn.) and Juju Watkins (2022-23 & 2021-22, Sierra Canyon School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-6 senior guard averaged 15 points, 7.4 rebounds, 5.1 assists and four steals per game this past season, leading the Thunder (24-6) to the Open State Championship title game. Ranked as the nation's No. 44 recruit in the Class of 2024 by espnW, Ijiwoye was also the 2024 Class 6A Central Region Player of the Year. She shot 53 percent from inside the arc and 39 percent from 3-point range in her final scholastic season, and was named the Nike Tournament of Champions Most Outstanding Player in 2022.

Ijiwoye has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving children, Paz de Cristo and Action Rebuild Liberia. She is a devoted parishioner of her 29:11 Church community and assists with children's day care every Sunday. The co-president of her school's Christian Youth Alive club and treasurer of the Heart to Heart club, she also donates her time to the Night to Shine prom for special needs students. "I believe Shay Ijiwoye is the absolute clear choice this year," said Curtis Andrew, head coach of Perry High School. "She played one of the toughest schedules in the state, leading her team in almost every category. Knowing how important character is on and off the court to the Gatorade award, Shay absolutely checks those boxes. There are other good candidates in Arizona, for sure, but in my eyes, it's clear-cut that Shay has set herself apart."

Ijiwoye has maintained an 4.39 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball on scholarship at Stanford 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.

Ijiwoye joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Players of the Year Khamil Pierre (2022-23, Perry High School), Jennah Isai (2021-22, Valley Vista High School), Marisa Davis (2020-21, Valley Vista High School) and Alyssa Brown (2019-20, Sahuaro High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than $4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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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