

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## St. Thomas Young Athlete Named Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player Of The Year

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ST. THOMAS -- In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company on Monday selected St. Thomas native Aliyah Boston, who attends Worcester Academy in Massachusetts, as its 2016-17 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year, according to a release Gatorade-- the ubiquitous American manufacturer of sports-themed beverage and food products -- announced via press release Monday.

Ms. Boston is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Worcester Academy.

According to the release, 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 Ms. Boston as Massachusetts's best high school girls basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year award announced in March, Ms. Boston joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Maya Moore (2005-06, Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.).

The 6-foot-3 sophomore center and power forward averaged 23.0 points, 14.7 rebounds, 4.8 blocks, 2.0 steals and 2.0 assists per game this past season, leading the Hilltoppers (19-3) to the New England Prep School Athletic Council Class AA tournament semifinals. Rated as the No. 4 recruit in the Class of 2019 by Blue Star Basketball Report, Ms. Boston was a NEPSAC Class A East All-Star selection. She recorded a double-double in all 22 games, including three games with at least 20 points and 20 rebounds.

Ms. Boston, who left her home in St. Thomas USVI to live with her aunt in Worcester, has volunteered locally as a student ambassador for Worcester Academy and as a youth basketball coach. "Aliyah is unguardable most of the time," said Tara Brisson, head coach of the Tilton School. "She is so skilled and strong, and the leap she has made between last year and this year is insane."

Ms. Boston has maintained a B average in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Ms. Boston joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Players of the Year Katie Benzan (2015-16, Noble & Greenough School), Ashley Russell (2014-15 & 2013-14, Braintree High School), Olivia Healy (2012-13, Reading Memorial High School), Nicole Boudreau (2011-12 & 2010-11, Andover High School), Lauren Battista (2009-10, Oliver Ames High School), Bilqis Abdul-Qaadir (2008-09, New Leadership Charter School), Felicia Barron (2007-08, Springfield Central High School), and Carolyn Swords (2006-07, LincolnSudbury High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ms. Boston will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants – one for each sport – will be announced throughout the year.

