

## DANNY GRANGER NBA MOST IMPROVED PLAYER



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The National Basketball Association announced Tuesday that Danny Granger is the 2008-09 winner of the league's Most Improved Player (MIP) Award, presented by Kia Motors. The annual award is presented to a player who has made a significant improvement from the previous season. In support of the MIP Award, Kia Motors America will donate either a new Borrego SUV or Sedona minivan on behalf of Granger to the Shepherd Community Center in Indianapolis.

"I'm honored, flattered and surprised," said Granger, the Pacers' No. 1 pick (17th overall) in the 2005 draft. "This is, above anything else, a team award and a franchise award because it is another indication the Indiana Pacers are moving in the right direction. This franchise has been through a lot so this is rewarding for everyone involved. The individual recognition is humbling, but team success means more to me than anything else and I will work as hard as I ever have to improve and get the Indiana Pacers back to the playoffs where they belong."

Granger, who this season was voted by Eastern Conference coaches to the All-Star team for the first time, was the NBA's fifth-leading scorer at 25.8 points per game. He became the first player in NBA history to raise his scoring average by at least five points in three consecutive seasons (from 7.5 to 13.9 to 19.6 to 25.8). He also registered career highs in assists (183); blocked shots (97); free throws made (404), free throws attempted (460); free throw percentage (.878); and equaled his career high in 3-point field goal percentage (.404). The 6-9 forward led the Pacers in scoring in 49 of the 67 games he played.

"We're very thrilled Danny won the Most Improved Award," said Pacers President of Basketball Larry Bird. "His hard work and dedication to the game is duly recognized by this honor. I couldn't be any happier for the progress Danny has made in the last four years. This goes to show that hard work does pay off."

"This is a tremendous compliment to Danny's work ethic," said Pacers Coach Jim O'Brien. "To have an outstanding year like he had last year when he was our leading scorer, then up his production to an All-Star level is great to see. This is an honor that is well deserved."

Granger, who had 364 total points and 48 first-place votes, edged out New Jersey's Devin Harris with 339 points and 43 first-place votes from a panel of 121 sportswriters and broadcasters throughout the United States and Canada. He becomes the ninth major NBA award winner for the Pacers, joining Jack McKinney (Coach of the Year, 1980-81); Chuck Person (Rookie of the Year, 1986-87); Detlef Schrempf (Sixth Man, 1990-91, '91-

'92); Larry Bird (Coach of the Year, 1997-98); Jalen Rose (Most Improved, 1999-00); Jermaine O'Neal (Most Improved, 2001-02); and Ron Artest (Defensive Player of the Year, 2003-04).

[http://www.nba.com/pacers/news/granger\\_mip\\_090512.html](http://www.nba.com/pacers/news/granger_mip_090512.html)