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**MT. CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Tyra Buss of Mt. Carmel High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Buss is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mt. Carmel 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 court, distinguishes Buss as Illinois'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, Buss joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Diana Taurasi (1998-99 & 1999-00, Don Antonio Lugo HS, Calif.), Maya Moore (2005-06 Collins Hill HS, Ga.), Rashanda McCants (2004-05, Asheville HS, N.C.), Shyra Ely (1999-00, Ben Davis HS, Ind.) and Lisa Leslie (1988-89, Morningside HS, Calif.)

The 5-foot-7 senior guard averaged 45.8 points, 6.7 steals, 5.5 rebounds and 3.6 assists per game this past season, leading the Aces (27-5) to the Class 2A sectional finals. The state's returning Miss Basketball as named by the Chicago Tribune and Illinois Basketball Coaches Association, Buss shot 55.4 percent from the field, 39.1 percent from 3-point range and 81.6 percent from the free throw line. Her career point total of 4,897 surpassed the previous state record set by 2006-07 Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Player of the Year Brittany Johnson, and ranks second in U.S. prep history.

Buss has maintained a 5.00 GPA on a 5.0 scale in the classroom and ranks No. 1 in her graduating class. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor, referee and game-clock operator, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army and Kiwanis International. A member of her school's student council, Buss has also tutored elementary school students.

"Tyra was without a doubt the most difficult player to prepare for as an opposing coach in my 33 years as a varsity coach," said Charles Mair, head coach of rival Princeton High. "I often in preparing to play Tyra hoped that she would miss the bus if coming to Princeton or get locked in the locker room if we played at Mt. Carmel. As a basketball player, she reminds me of a female 'Pistol' Pete Maravich. She is a magician with the basketball and has the ability to create shots that others do not even fathom existing."

Buss has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Indiana 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Buss joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jackie Kempf (2012-13, Rolling Meadows High School), Morgan Tuck (2011-12, Bolingbrook High School), Ariel Massengale (2010-11, Bolingbrook High School), Tricia Liston (2009-10 & 2008-09, Fenwick), Sarah Boothe (2007-08, Warren Township), and Brittany Johnson (2006-07, East Richland) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit www.gatorade.com/poy.

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