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**GATORADE® NATIONAL GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
KATIE LOU SAMUELSON**

Two-time WNBA All-Star Elena Delle Donne Surprises Standout with Elite Honor

Santa Ana, Calif. (March 19, 2015) - In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Katie Lou Samuelson of Mater Dei High School (Santa Ana, Calif.) as its 2014-15 Gatorade National Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Samuelson was surprised with the news at school by two-time WNBA All-Star and former three-time Gatorade Delaware Girls Basketball Player of the Year Elena Delle Donne.

"It was exciting for me to be able to surprise Katie Lou with the Gatorade National Basketball Player of the Year award, especially because she is such a deserving winner," Delle Donne said. "Katie Lou is a well-rounded individual who has already accomplished so much on and off the court, so it's an honor for me to welcome her into the prestigious Gatorade Player of the Year family."

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 Samuelson as the nation's best high school girls basketball player. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select Samuelson from nearly 440,000 high school girls basketball players nationwide. Samuelson is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Female High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 6-foot-3 senior guard has led the Monarchs to a 30-2 record and a berth in the semifinals of the Open Division state tournament against Chaminade, scheduled for March 21. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Samuelson is averaging 30.0 points, 8.6 rebounds and 2.3 steals per game. The leading scorer for the USA Basketball Women's U17 National Team that won the world championship in 2014, she has been chosen to play in the McDonald's All-American Game and the Jordan Brand Classic. Samuelson was also named National Player of the Year by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and was selected for the USA TODAY's All-USA First Team.

Samuelson has maintained a 4.26 weighted GPA in the classroom. A volunteer coach and counselor for the Kiernan/Mater Dei Camp of Champions, she has donated her time as an assistant and entertainer at the Boo Bash Dance and Dinner for special needs children. She has also participated in multiple community service initiatives,

including the Santa Ana YMCA's Tie Blanket Project, the Buddy Walk to benefit the National Down Syndrome Society and the Mater Dei Family Mass & Pancake Breakfast.

"The best player in the country is Katie Lou Samuelson," said Blue Star Basketball national talent evaluator Kevin Lynch. "She's the best big shooter I've seen since Elena Delle Donne. She reads defenses well, knows how to get open and she's really developed an edge to her game too. She'll battle you, and she's a hell of a teammate."

Samuelson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Connecticut this fall.

"Without question, Katie Lou is deserving of recognition as the nation's best high school girls basketball player based on her statistics on the court and the impact her accomplishments have had on Mater Dei's success," said Gatorade Chief Marketing Officer Morgan Flatley. "But she is also a shining example to peers and aspiring young athletes of what a leader and a student-athlete should be. She represents everything we hope for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient."

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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- WNBA all-time leading scorer and rebounder Lisa Leslie
- NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at

<http://www.gatorade.com/poy>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

YEAR	NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	STATUS
2014-15	Katie Lou Samuelson	Mater Dei/Santa Ana, CA	High School Senior
2013-14	Brianna Turner	Manvel/Manvel, TX	Notre Dame
2012-13	Mercedes Russell	Springfield/Springfield, OR	Univ. of Tennessee
2011-12	Breanna Stewart	Cicero-North Syracuse/Cicero, NY	Univ. of Connecticut
2010-11	Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis	Mater Dei/Santa Ana, CA	Univ. of Connecticut
2009-10	Chiney Ogwumike	Cy-Fair/Cypress, TX	Connecticut Sun
2008-09	Skylar Diggins	Washington/South Bend, IN	Tulsa Shock
2007-08	Nneka Ogwumike	Cy-Fair/Cypress, TX	Los Angeles Sparks
2006-07	Maya Moore	Collins Hill/Suwanee, GA	Minnesota Lynx
2005-06	Tina Charles	Christ the King/Middle Village, NY	New York Liberty
2004-05	Abby Waner	ThunderRidge/Highlands Ranch, CO	Univ. of Denver Coach Staff
2003-04	Candace Parker	Naperville Central/Naperville, IL	Los Angeles Sparks
2002-03	Candace Parker	Naperville Central/Naperville, IL	Los Angeles Sparks
2001-02	Ann Strother	Highlands Ranch/Highlands Ranch, CO	Retired from WNBA
2000-01	Shyra Ely	Ben Davis/Indianapolis, IN	WNBA Free Agent
1999-00	Shereka Wright	Copperas Cove/Copperas Cove, TX	Univ. of Alabama Coach Staff
1998-99	Nicole Kaczmariski	Sachem North/Lake Rononkoma, NY	Retired from WNBA
1997-98	Tamika Raymond	Chaminade-Julienne/Dayton, OH	Univ. of Kentucky Coach Staff
1996-97	Nikki Teasley	St. John's at Prospect Hall/Frederick, MD	Retired from WNBA
1995-96	Jamie Walz	Highlands/Ft. Thomas, KY	Highlands (Ky.) HS Coach
1994-95	Stephanie McCarty	Seeger/West Lebanon, IN	Retired from WNBA
1993-94	Monick Foote	Samford/Wilmington, DE	Retired Pro
1992-93	La'Keshia Frett	Phoebus/Hampton, VA	Univ. of Virginia Coach Staff
1991-92	Katie Smith	Logan/Logan, OH	Retired from WNBA
1990-91	Michelle Marciniak	Central Catholic/Allentown, PA	Retired from WNBA
1989-90	Lisa Leslie	Morningside/Inglewood, CA	Retired from WNBA
1988-89	Lisa Harrison	Southern/Louisville, KY	Retired from WNBA
1987-88	Vicki Hall	Brebeuf Preparatory/Indianapolis, IN	Univ. of Toledo Coach Staff
1986-87	Kris Durham	Union Catholic/Scotch Plains, NJ	Seton Hall Univ. Grad.
1985-86	Susan Anderson	Mt. Baker/Deming, WA	Univ. of Texas Grad.

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