

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)

**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Shilpa Tummala of St. Mary's Catholic High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Tummala is the third Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Mary's Catholic 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 Tummala as Arizona'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, Tummala joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2003-04, 2002-03, & 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-11 senior guard led the Knights to a 30-0 record, the Division 1 state championship and a No. 1 ranking in the ESPNHS Fab 50 this past season. Tummala averaged 13.3 points, 3.4 rebounds, 2.7 assists and 2.6 steals per game. A member of the Arizona Republic's All-Arizona Team, she was named Most Outstanding Player at the Nike Tournament of Champions and was selected as an Honorable Mention All-American by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association.

Tummala has maintained a 4.42 GPA in the classroom and is ranked first academically in her senior class. A member of her school's student council, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Boys and Girls Clubs of America, her school library and an area food bank.

"Tummala is a very tough player to match up against," said Dariyon Shabazz, head coach at North High. "She can get to the basket at will, she can hit the 3-pointer consistently and she has a pretty nice post-up game too. She's also a good passer, and a beast on the defensive end."

Tummala will attend Harvard University this fall, where she will play basketball.

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 ESPNHS and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Tummala joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Players of the Year Promise Amukamara (2010-11, Apollo High School), Rebecca Woodberry (2009-10, Tolleson), Davellyn Whyte (2008-09, St. Mary's Catholic), Amy Patton (2007-08, McClintock), Kayla Pedersen (2006 - 07, Red Mountain), Sybil Dosty (2003-04, Salpointe Catholic), and Erin O'Bryan (2002-03, High Schoolland) 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

###