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**TOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT 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 Kristin Schatzlein of Tolland High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Schatzlein is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Tolland 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 Schatzlein as Connecticut'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, Schatzlein 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 6-foot senior guard has led the Eagles to a 22-3 record and a berth in the Class M state semifinals against Ellington, scheduled for March 9. Through 25 games, Schatzlein was averaging 20.3 points, 9.9 rebounds, 6.3 assists, 5.5 steals and 2.1 blocks. A four-time All-Conference selection, she was named All-State by the New Haven Register and the Hartford Courant as a junior.

Schatzlein has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs and has raised funds to benefit diabetes research.

"Schatzlein never gets rattled on the floor and always wants the ball when the game is on the line," said Dan Matthews, head coach at Bloomfield High. "She shoots the ball extremely well from beyond the arc, but she also handles the ball well."

Schatzlein has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at Fairfield 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 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.

Schatzlein joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Basketball Players of the Year Katie Mahoney (2010-11, Bacon Academy), Kastine Evans (2009-10, Norwich Free Academy), Symone Roberts (2008-09, New Britain), Heather Buck (2007-08 & 2006 - 07, Stonington), Shamika Jackson (2003-04, East Catholic), and Amanda Pape (2002-03, Trinity Catholic) 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.

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