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**PONAGANSET HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (December 12, 2012) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Taylor Stevens of Ponaganset High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year. Stevens is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ponaganset 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 field, distinguishes Stevens as Rhode Island's best high school volleyball player. Stevens joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including USA Volleyball players Kim Glass (2001-02, Horseshoe HS, Penn.), Kim Willoughby (1998-99, 1999-00, Assumption HS, La.) and Ogonna Nnamani (1999-00, University HS, Ill).

The 5-foot-6 senior setter and outside hitter recorded 442 assists, 219 digs, 215 kills, 63 service aces and 40 blocks while posting a kill percentage of .455 this past season, leading the Chieftains (8-9) to the Division I state quarterfinals. The 2012 Rhode Island Volleyball Coaches Association Player of the Year, Stevens was a two-time First Team All-State selection and a 2010 Second Team All-State honoree. She concluded her prep volleyball career with 2,026 assists, 324 kills and 262 service aces.

Stevens has maintained a 3.80 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the Ponaganset High student council, she has volunteered locally at Isaac Paine Elementary School in Foster and as a peer mentor.

"Taylor Stevens is clearly an intelligent, knowledgeable player who combines her athleticism to create a dynamic presence on the court," said Victoria Tefft, head coach of North Kingstown High. "She filled a number of holes for Ponaganset this season, displaying her overall skill set and comfort in a variety of roles."

Stevens remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Stevens joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Volleyball Players of the Year Kelsey Lace (2011-12, Mount Saint Charles Academy), Elise Walsh (2010-11 & 2009-10, The Prout School), Katie Walsh (2008-09, The Prout School) and Sam Andreozzi (2007-08, North Kingstown) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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