

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

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

CHICAGO (March 14, 2013) — 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 Courtney Ekmark of Saint Mary's Catholic High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Ekmark is the third Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Saint 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 Ekmark 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, Ekmark 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 6-foot junior guard led the Knights to a 29-1 record, their third consecutive Division 1 state championship and a No. 2 ranking in the USA Today Super 25 this past season. Ekmark averaged 19.6 points, five rebounds and four steals per game. A First Team All-Region selection, she was the leading scorer in the state final for the third straight year and is rated as the No. 13 recruit in the Class of 2014 by Blue Star Basketball.

Ekmark has maintained a 4.32 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has participated in literacy-outreach initiatives and volunteered locally feeding the homeless.

"Ekmark is a fantastic basketball player," said Lisa Contreras, head coach at Westview High. "She does a great job of reading the defense and coming off picks, and she's an outstanding shooter."

Ekmark will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Ekmark joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Basketball Players of the Year Shilpa Tummala (2011-12, St. Mary's Catholic High School), 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), and Kayla Pedersen (2006-07, Red Mountain) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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