

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

**GILL ST. BERNARD'S SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY 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 Taylor Rooks of Gill St. Bernard's School as its 2012-13 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Rooks is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gill St. Bernard's 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 Rooks as New Jersey'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, Rooks 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-1 junior guard led the Knights to a 23-5 record and the Non-Public B championship game this past season. Rooks averaged 27.4 points, 9.6 rebounds, 3.2 steals, 2.1 assists and 1.7 blocked shots per game. A First Team All-State selection, she was the Somerset County Player of the Year in 2012 and is rated as the No. 30 recruit in the Class of 2014 by Blue Star Basketball.

Rooks has maintained 4.17 GPA in the classroom. She helped found Melina's White Light, a foundation that supports childhood cancer research. Rooks has also volunteered on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and a local food bank.

"Rooks has consistently put her team on her shoulders and carried them to victory," said Dorcas Miller-Edwards, head coach at Bridgewater-Raritan High. "She makes all of her teammates better. She has to guard the opponent's best player on defense and she's always in position to rebound."

Rooks 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.

Rooks joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Players of the Year Michaela Mabrey (2011-12, Manasquan High School), Temi Fagbenle (2010-11, Blair Academy), Haley Peters (2009-10, Peddie School), Laurin Mincy (2008-09, University), Lakeisha Sutton (2007-08, Trenton Catholic Academy), and Tayler Wejnert (2006-07, Academy of the Holy Angels) 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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