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**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 14, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Taylor Buckley of Exeter-West Greenwich High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Buckley is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Exeter-West Greenwich 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 Buckley as Rhode Island'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, Buckley 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 5-foot-11 junior center averaged 17.5 points, 12.6 rebounds and 2.3 blocks per game this past season, leading the Scarlet Knights (21-2) to the Division I state semifinals. Buckley was a Rhode Island Coaches Association First Team All-State selection and a First Team All-Division I honoree. She led all of Division I in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots.

Buckley, who is home-schooled, has maintained a 3.83 GPA. A volunteer with the Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department, she has also donated her time locally on behalf of the Providence Rescue Mission, as a nursery school volunteer and as part of a fundraising campaign to benefit third-world hunger awareness.

"Taylor Buckley is very strong and tough to defend," said Gary Martinelli, head coach of Ponaganset High. "She can score out to 15 feet. She has great hands and is a tough defender down low. She's the best low-post presence in the state."

Buckley 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.

Buckley joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kailey Fugere (2011-12, Woonsocket High School), Kelly Mannix (2010-11, Barrington High School), Allie Jones (2009-10, South Kingstown), Torey Jones (2008-09, La Salle Academy), Brittany Wilson (2007-08, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Meredith Ward (2006-07, Westerly) 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.

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