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**DUNCANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TEXAS 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 Ariel Atkins of Duncanville High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Atkins is the first Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Duncanville 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 Atkins as Texas'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, Atkins 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-10 junior wing led Duncanville to a 42-0 record and a second consecutive Class 5A state title this past season. She averaged 16.8 points, 6.1 rebounds, 5.5 steals, 4.5 assists and 1.0 block per game. The District 7-5A Most Valuable Player shot 55 percent from the floor, 48 percent from 3-point range and 78 percent from the free throw line. She recorded 13 points, seven rebounds and two assists in 23 minutes of action during a 59-36, title-clinching win over Steele, earning All-Tournament Team honors.

Atkins has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor, coach and game-clock operator, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a blood-donation drive, an elementary school student-mentorship program, the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"She is one of those rare greats who makes her teammates better," said Kit Martin, head coach of rival Mansfield Timberview High. "She can score at will from the block to the 3-point arc. She is a tremendous passer in the open court and in half-court offense. She is a good defender and rebounder as well. I can with the utmost conviction tell you that she is the best player in Texas right now."

Atkins will begin her senior year of high school this fall and has verbally committed to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Texas in the fall of 2014.

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.

Atkins joins recent Gatorade Texas Girls Basketball Players of the Year Alexis Jones (2011-12 & 2010-11, MacArthur High School), Chiney Ogwumike (2009-10, Cy-Fair), Brittney Griner (2008-09, Nimitz), and Nneka Ogwumike (2007-08 & 2006-07, Cy-Fair) 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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