

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**SHANLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 21, 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 A.J. Jacobson of Shanley High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Jacobson is the first Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Shanley 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 Jacobson as North Dakota's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Jacobson joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-6, 215-pound senior guard and forward led the Deacons to a 20-4 record and the Class A state title this past season. Jacobson averaged 26.4 points, 12.8 rebounds, 5.1 assists, 2.6 steals and 2.5 blocks while shooting at 82 percent from the free throw line. A First Team All-State selection, Jacobson scored 37 points, including 9-for-9 from inside the arc and 13-for-13 from the line, in an 86-60 win over Fargo Davies in the Class A state final.

Jacobson has maintained a 4.02 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and an altar server in his parish community, he has volunteered as a tutor for students with dyslexia and as a youth athletic coach for children with physical challenges.

"A.J. Jacobson has been a nightmare matchup for us the past four years," said Jeff Ralph, head coach at Wahpeton High. "His size creates difficult challenges for our perimeter guys and his quickness, ball-handling and outside shooting ability is tough for our post guys to guard. I am very happy that he is graduating."

Jacobson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at North Dakota State University 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.

Jacobson joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Boys Basketball Players of the Year Dexter Werner (2011-12 & 2010-11, Bismarck High School), Nik Savageau (2009-10, Fargo North), Joe Hanstad (2008-09, Dickinson High School), Austin Dufault (2007-08, Killdeer High School), and Tate Kick (2006 - 07, Dickinson) 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.

###