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**BRIARCREST CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® TENNESSEE 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 Austin Nichols of Briarcrest Christian High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Nichols is the second Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Briarcrest Christian 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 Nichols as Tennessee'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, Nichols 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-9, 218-pound senior forward averaged 22.7 points, 12.2 rebounds, 2.6 blocks and 1.5 assists per game this past season, leading the Saints (27-7) to the Division II-AA state championship game. A two-time Division II-AA Mr. Basketball winner, Nichols was a McDonald's All-American Game nominee. He scored 42 points and grabbed 17 rebounds in an 87-77, overtime loss to Ensworth High in the state title game to conclude his prep basketball career with 1,987 points and 996 rebounds.

Nichols has maintained a B average in the classroom. A member of the Briarcrest Ambassadors, he has completed two service mission trips in association with the school and donated his time as a youth basketball coach and counselor.

"Austin Nichols is a great player," said Doug Bontrager, head coach of Father Ryan Academy. "He has exceptional hands and feet. His size and passing ability make him hard to defend. He is really one of the best passing big men I have encountered in all my years of coaching."

Nichols has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Memphis beginning 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.

Nichols joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Boys Basketball Players of the Year Alex Poythress (2011-12, Northeast High School), Adonis Thomas (2010-11, Melrose High School), Joe Jackson (2009-10, White Station), John Jenkins (2008-09, Station Camp High School), Leslie McDonald (2007-08, Briarcrest Christian School), and Maurice Miller (2006 - 07, Raleigh-Egypt) 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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