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**BRAINTREE HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 13, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ashley Russell of Braintree High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Russell is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Braintree 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 Russell as Massachusetts'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, Russell 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 point guard has led the Wamps to a 23-1 record and a berth in the Division 1 state final against Westford Academy, scheduled for March 15. At the time of her selection, Russell was averaging 13.7 points, 11.1 rebounds, 6.9 assists and 3.1 steals per game. The 2014 Bay State Conference Player of the Year, she is a three-time First Team All-Conference honoree.

Russell has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. A member of the Braintree High prom committee, she has volunteered locally with Relay for Life, the Best Buddies International program and as a youth basketball coach.

"Ashley Russell is the best player in our league," said Wellesley High coach Kristin Cieri. "She is tall, quick, athletic, smart, can shoot and plays outstanding defense. She is as good a player as I have seen."

Russell 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.

Russell joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Players of the Year Olivia Healy (2012-13, Reading Memorial High School), Nicole Boudreau (2011-12 & 2010-11, Andover High School), Lauren Battista (2009-10, Oliver Ames), Bilqis Abdul-Qadir (2008-09, New Leadership Charter School), Felicia Barron (2007-08, Springfield Central), and Carolyn Swords (2006-07, Lincoln-Sudbury) 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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