

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**FOREST PARK HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MICHIGAN 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 Lexi Gussert of Forest Park High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Gussert is the first Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Forest Park 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 Gussert as Michigan'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, Gussert 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 6-foot-1 senior wing led the Trojans to a 25-0 record and a berth in the Class D semifinals, scheduled for March 13. Entering the postseason round of eight, Gussert was averaging 29.3 points per game before dropping 43 in the quarterfinals. She was also averaging 11.6 rebounds, 7.1 assists and 3.7 steals through 24 games. The two-time Associated Press Class D Player of the Year, she enters the final four with 99 career 3-pointers, one off the state record of 100. A three-time First Team All-State selection and a Michigan Miss Basketball finalist, she has broken the Upper Peninsula's career scoring record with 2,629 points and counting.

Gussert has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and the Business Professionals of America student organization, she has served as the president of her graduating class in addition to volunteering as a youth basketball and volleyball coach.

"I've seen a lot of great players over the years and by far Lexi Gussert is a better player than all of them," said Mike Cross, head coach at Kingsford High. "When we played her, she had a quiet 40 points if it's even possible to have a quiet 40 points. She's very subtle about her game. But what really makes her stand out is the way she passes. You could contain the other kids, but you just can't account for her passing. She is just a phenomenal kid and a great player."

Gussert has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Michigan 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.

Gussert joins recent Gatorade Michigan Girls Basketball Players of the Year Tori Jankoska (2012-13, Freeland High School), Madison Ristovski (2011-12, University Liggett School), Jasmine Hines (2010-11, Central Lake High School), Madison Williams (2009-10, Detroit Country Day School), Destiny Williams (2008-09, Benton Harbor), Kellie Watson (2007-08, Ionia), and Keshia Hines (2006-07, Avondale) 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.

###