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**ROCK BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MISSOURI 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 Sophie Cunningham of Rock Bridge High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Cunningham is the second Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rock Bridge 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 Cunningham as Missouri'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, Cunningham 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 junior guard led the Bruins to a 22-3 record and a berth in the Class 5 state tournament against Washington High, scheduled for March 12. At the time of her selection, Cunningham was averaging 18.3 points, 5.1 rebounds, 4.3 assists and 2.4 steals per game. A two-time Missouri Basketball Coaches Association First Team All-State honoree and a two-time Columbia Daily Tribune Player of the Year, she is ranked as the nation's No. 17 recruit in the Class of 2015 by Blue Star Basketball.

Cunningham has maintained a 3.06 GPA in the classroom. A Rock Bridge High student council representative, she has volunteered locally with the Central Missouri Food Bank and has donated her time to multiple community service projects in association with her church.

"Sophie Cunningham is so versatile and is such a team leader," said Patti Perkins, head coach of Webster Groves High. "I would love to have a player that leads my team like Sophie. She has the ability to handle the ball, slash the paint and shoot."

Cunningham has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Missouri on an athletic scholarship in the fall of 2015.

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.

Cunningham joins recent Gatorade Missouri Girls Basketball Players of the Year Napheesa Collier (2012-13, Incarnate Word Academy), Maddie Stock (2011-12, St. Joseph's Academy), Shelby Winkelmann (2010-11, Hermann High School), Jazmin Hitchens (2009-10, Incarnate Word Academy), Katherine Harry (2008-09, Rock Bridge), Kathleen Scheer (2007-08, New Haven), and Tyra White (2006-07, Hickman Mills) 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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