

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA 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 Jill Barta of Fairfield High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Barta is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fairfield 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 Barta as Montana'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, Barta 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-4 senior center has led the Eagles to a 23-0 record and a berth in the Class B state quarterfinals, scheduled for March 13. At the time of her selection, Barta was averaging 24.5 points, 9.5 rebounds, 3.5 steals, 3.3 blocks and 2.8 assists per game. The three-time defending Class B state champions, Fairfield is 101-0 in Barta's three-plus seasons with the team. A three-time Class B First Team All-State honoree and the MVP of the 2013 state tournament, she has earned Great Falls Tribune Super State Team recognition three times.

Barta has maintained a B average in the classroom as an upperclassman. A member of the Fairfield High Student Council, she has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth basketball coach and official.

"Jill Barta is a tremendous player," said John Shepherd, head coach of Choteau High. "She can handle the ball, pass and score from inside and out. Her height alone is a factor, but she is very athletic and makes basketball look easy, almost too easy at times."

Barta has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Gonzaga 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.

Barta joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Goligoski (2012-13, Hamilton High School), Peyton Ferris (2011-12, Twin Bridges High School), Danielle Muri (2010-11, Billings West High School), Lexie Nelson (2009-10, Butte), Joslyn Tinkle (2008-09 & 2007-08, Big Sky), and Kirsten Tilleman (2006-07, Bozeman) 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.

###