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**FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Jessica Shepard of Fremont High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Shepard is the first Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fremont 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 Shepard as Nebraska'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, Shepard 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 state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Shepard averaged 30.4 points, 15.6 rebounds and 2.4 assists this past season, leading the Tigers (22-4) to a berth in the Class A state tournament. Also a returning Omaha World-Herald First Team All-Nebraska selection and Lincoln Journal Star First Team Super-State honorary captain, the 6-foot-3 junior wing averaged 30.0 points, 14.8 rebounds and 2.7 assists per game. She led Lincoln Southeast to the 2013 Class A state champion as a sophomore.

Shepard has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor and a special needs classroom assistant, she has volunteered on behalf of her church, a homeless shelter, the Special Olympics, the Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"She might be the best or second-best player to play in Nebraska, ever," said Steve Clark, head coach of rival Omaha Westside High. "She's 6-foot-3 and handles the ball as their point guard, shoots the 3-pointer, is physical and hits over 60 percent from the field."

Shepard will begin her senior year of high school this fall and has verbally committed to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska beginning 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.

Two time winner Shepard joins Gatorade Nebraska Girls Basketball Players of the Year Brianna Craig (2011-12, Lincoln Northeast High School), Alexis Akin-Otiko (2010-11, Bellevue West High School), Jordan Hooper (2009-10 & 2007-08, Alliance), K.K. Houser (2008-09, Lincoln Southeast), and Dominique Kelley (2006-07, Lincoln Northeast) 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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