

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**GILL ST. BERNARD'S SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW JERSEY 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 Taylor Rooks of Gill St. Bernard's School as its 2013-14 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Rooks is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Gill St. Bernard's 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 Rooks as New Jersey'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, Rooks 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 senior guard led the Knights to a 26-4 record and the North Jersey Non-Public B title game this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Rooks averaged 23.6 points, 10.7 rebounds, 2.8 steals, 2.8 assists and 1.9 blocked shots per game.

An Honorable Mention All-American as named by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association, she is a two-time First Team All-State honoree and is rated as the nation's No. 19 recruit in the Class of 2014 by ESPN.

Rooks has maintained a 4.20 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered on behalf of a local food bank and Melina's White Light, a foundation that supports childhood cancer research.

"She's a very athletic scorer who can shoot the 3-pointer or slash to the basket," said Mary Coyle Klinger, head coach at Rutgers Prep. "She's extremely quick and she does whatever it takes to win."

Rooks has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Stanford 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.

Two time winner Rooks joins Gatorade New Jersey Girls Basketball Players of the Year Michaela Mabrey (2011-12, Manasquan High School), Temi Fagbenle (2010-11, Blair Academy), Haley Peters (2009-10, Peddie School), Laurin Mincy (2008-09, University), Lakeisha Sutton (2007-08, Trenton Catholic Academy), and Tayler Wejnert (2006-07, Academy of the Holy Angels) 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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