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**NORTH KINGSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Buckley of North Kingstown High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Buckley is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Kingstown 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 Buckley as Rhode Island'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, Buckley 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 returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-11 senior center has led the Skippers to a 19-2 record and a berth in the Division I state quarterfinals, scheduled for March 15. At the time of her selection, Buckley was averaging 15.5 points, 11.9 rebounds, 2.1 blocks and 1.5 steals per game. A two-time First Team All-State selection by the Rhode Island Coaches Association, she led all of Division I in scoring, rebounding and blocked shots during the 2012-13 season as a student at Exeter/West Greenwich High.

Buckley has maintained an A average in the classroom. A junior member of the Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department, she has completed a mission trip to Belize, and has donated her time locally to the Providence Rescue Mission and as a youth basketball coach.

"Taylor's presence in the paint for our team this year and her offensive mindset to rebound the ball and score is second to none," said Bob Simeone, head coach of North Kingstown High. "She is a defensive presence as she controls the boards. Her love for the game and drive to succeed is a coach's dream."

Buckley has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Cedarville University in Ohio 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 Buckley joins Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Basketball Players of the Year Kailey Fugere (2011-12, Woonsocket High School), Kelly Mannix (2010-11, Barrington High School), Allie Jones (2009-10, South Kingstown), Torey Jones (2008-09, La Salle Academy), Brittany Wilson (2007-08, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Meredith Ward (2006-07, Westerly) 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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