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**STEVENSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 21, 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 Jalen Brunson of Stevenson High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Brunson is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Stevenson 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 Brunson as Illinois's best high school boys basketball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Basketball Player of the Year award to be announced in March, Brunson joins an elite alumni association of past state boys basketball award winners, including Dwight Howard (2003-04, SW Atlanta Christian Academy, Ga.), Chauncey Billups (1993-94 & 1994-95, George Washington HS, Colo.), Jason Kidd (1991-92, St. Joseph Notre Dame HS, Calif.), Paul Pierce (1994-95, Inglewood HS, Calif.) and Chris Bosh (2001-02, Lincoln HS, Texas).

The 6-foot-1, 180-pound junior guard has led the Patriots to a 31-1 record and a berth in the Class 4A state semifinals, scheduled for March 20. A returning First Team All-State selection as named by the Chicago Tribune, Brunson averaged 25.4 points, 5.2 rebounds, 4.9 assists and 2.9 steals per game. He scored a school-record 56 points in a 95-93, double-overtime victory against Lake Forest on Feb. 21.

Brunson has maintained a weighted GPA of 3.30 in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade Award's broad criteria. He has volunteered locally as a youth basketball instructor and referee.

"Jalen plays the game the right way," said Ryan Webber, head coach of rival Warren Township High. "This was my ninth year as a head coach, and I have not competed against a more fierce competitor. His character stands out each and every time I watch him play. I can only imagine what a dream it must be to coach a player that exemplifies complete athletic excellence and the character and grace of a champion the way Jalen does. He is great for his school, our conference, our area and the state of Illinois."

Brunson will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Brunson joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Basketball Players of the Year Jabari Parker (2012-13 & 2011-12, Simeon Career Academy), Chasson Randle (2010-11, Rock Island High School), Rayvonte Rice (2009-10, Centennial), Matt Vogrich (2008-09, Lake Forest High School), Michael Dunigan (2007-08, Farragut Career Academy), and Derrick Rose (2006-07, Simeon) 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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