

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**BLUE VALLEY NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Clay Custer of Blue Valley Northwest High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Custer is the second Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Blue Valley Northwest 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 Custer as Kansas'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, Custer 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 senior point guard led the Huskies to a 23-2 record and a second consecutive Class 6A state championship this past season. A two-time returning Class 6A First Team All-State selection as named by the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association, Custer averaged 19.4 points, 4.1 rebounds, 3.9 assists and 2.4 steals per game. In his fourth straight appearance in the Class 6A state title game, he scored a game-high 25 points in a 73-46 victory against Blue Valley North.

Custer has maintained a weighted GPA of 3.82 in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth basketball instructor, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and as part of Neighbor2Neighbor's efforts to benefit the homeless.

"He is clearly the best in Kansas," said Mark Rabbitt, head coach of rival Blue Valley Southwest High. "His ability to put up numbers while still getting teammates involved impresses me most. He's unselfish. He has the ability to get up in the air, create contact, get calls and finish. You can't teach this."

Custer has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Iowa State 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.

Custer joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Basketball Players of the Year Semi Ojeleye (2012-13, Ottawa High School), Perry Ellis (2011-12, 2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, Wichita Heights High School), Travis Releford (2007-08, Bishop Miege High School), and Tyrel Reed (2006 - 07, Burlington) 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.

###