

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® ALASKA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 12, 2015) — In its 30<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ruthy Hebard of West Valley High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Hebard is the third Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Valley 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 Hebard as Alaska'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, Hebard 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-3 junior forward has led the Wolfpack to a perfect 24-0 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament, scheduled for March 19. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Hebard is averaging 25.6 points, 13.1 rebounds, 3.5 steals, 2.8 assists and 2.2 blocks per game. A First Team All-State selection and MVP of the Dimond Lady Lynx Shootout, she was also named to USA TODAY's All-USA Alaska First Team.

Hebard has maintained a 3.5 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally assisting the elderly and coaching youth basketball.

"Hebard plays with a lot of poise and character and she is a tremendous athlete," said Roland Hepa, head coach of Barrow High. "She's really a well-rounded player. We would double-team her every time she touched the ball in the paint, because of her ability and size, but she can handle the ball and shoot from the perimeter too."

Hebard will begin her 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.

Two-time winner Hebard joins Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Players of the Year Alysha Devine (2012-13, Wasilla High School), Hannah Mattson (2011-12, West Valley High School), Keiahnna Engel (2010-11 & 2009-10, Dimond High School), Jenna Johnson (2008-09, Wasilla), Sylvia Bullock (2007-08, South Anchorage), and Talisa Rhea (2006-07, Juneau-Douglas) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###