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**BRAINTREE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 12, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ashley Russell of Braintree High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Russell is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Braintree 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 Russell as Massachusetts'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, Russell 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 state's returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior point guard has led the Wamps to a 24-0 record and a berth in the Division 1 state final, scheduled for March 14. At the time of her selection, Russell was averaging 13.2 points, 9.0 rebounds, 5.0 assists and 3.0 steals per game. The two-time Bay State Conference Player of the Year, she is a four-time First Team All-Conference selection and has scored 1,069 points in her prep basketball career.

Russell has maintained a B-plus average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with Relay for Life, the Best Buddies International program and as a youth basketball coach.

"Ashley Russell is the type of player that makes her teammates better," said Denise Beliveau, head coach of Framingham High. "Her versatility on offense makes her a big threat, but she also does the little things like make the hustle plays and work on the boards."

Russell has verbally committed to attend the University of Pennsylvania, where she will play basketball beginning 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 Russell joins Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Basketball Players of the Year Olivia Healy (2012-13, Reading Memorial High School), Nicole Boudreau (2011-12 & 2010-11, Andover High School), Lauren Battista (2009-10, Oliver Ames), Bilqis Abdul-Qadir (2008-09, New Leadership Charter School), Felicia Barron (2007-08, Springfield Central), and Carolyn Swords (2006-07, Lincoln-Sudbury) 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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