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**WEDDINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Stephanie Watts of Weddington High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Watts is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Weddington 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 Watts as North Carolina'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, Watts 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 5-foot-10 senior guard averaged 29.1 points, 8.8 rebounds, 6.1 assists, 4.7 steals and 2.4 blocks per game this past season, leading the Warriors (29-2) to the Class 3A regional finals. A McDonald's All-American Game and Jordan Brand Classic selection, Watts shot 45.6 percent from the field, 40.9 percent from 3-point range and 75.3 percent from the free-throw line. Also a two-time returning First Team All-State honoree, Watts' 3-point total of 156 in 2014-15 set a single-season state record. This past summer, she received an invite to the 2014 USA Basketball Women's U18 National Team Trials.

Watts has maintained a 3.63 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has donated her time locally as a youth basketball instructor at camps and on behalf of Carolina Courts, a year-round basketball and volleyball training facility.

"I've never felt as helpless as a coach when we play against her, because she is simply that much better of an athlete than everyone else on the floor," said Joel Allen, head coach of rival Cuthbertson High. "She's the most dominant high school player of any sport of any gender that I have ever seen with my own two eyes, and I've seen a lot of talented players up close in our area over the last decade in football, basketball, baseball and softball."

Watts has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Watts joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Jatarie White (2013-14 & 2012-13, Providence Day School), Tiffany Mitchell (2011-12, Providence Day School), Cierra Burdick (2010-11 & 2009-10, Butler High School), Asia Williams (2008-09, Hillside), Candace Wood (2007-08, Victory Christian Center School), and Cetera DeGraffenreid (2006-07, Smoky Mountain) 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).

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