

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelly Magnus (312-729-3622)

**RICE MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT BOYS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 20, 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 Ben Shungu of Rice Memorial High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year. Shungu is the fourth Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rice Memorial 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 Shungu as Vermont'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, Shungu 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, 200-pound junior guard led the Green Knights to a 23-1 record and their third consecutive Division 1 state championship this past season. Shungu averaged 18.1 points, 6.7 rebounds, 5.1 assists and 2.3 steals per game. A First Team All-Metro and Second Team Burlington Free Press All-State selection as a junior, he was also named to the Vermont Basketball Coaches Association Dream Dozen and USA TODAY's All-USA Vermont Second Team.

Shungu has maintained a B average in the classroom. A peer mentor in his school, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Boys and Girls Club of Burlington and youth basketball programs.

"Shungu creates matchup nightmares," said Sol Bayer-Pacht, head coach at South Burlington High. "He can post up small guys, he can put the ball on the floor and make plays. He doesn't have any off nights."

Shungu 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.

Shungu joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Basketball Players of the Year Pavin Parrish (2013-14, Rochester High School), Matt St. Amour (2012-13 & 2011-12, Missisquoi Valley Union High School), Ben Ferris (2010-11, Essex High School), Joe O'Shea (2009-10, Burlington High School), Clancy Rugg (2008-09, Burlington High School), Matt Joslin (2007-08, North Country Union High School), and Pat Bergmann (2006-07, Rice Memorial High School) 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.

###