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**MALTA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MONTANA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 10, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sophia Stiles of Malta High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Stiles is the second Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Malta 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 Stiles as Montana'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, Stiles 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-9 junior guard has led the M-ettes to a 23-0 record and a berth in the Class B state tournament quarterfinals against Big Fork High, scheduled for March 10. At the time of her selection, Stiles was averaging 17.2 points, 5.8 assists, 5.2 steals and 4.3 rebounds per game for a Malta team that has won 49 straight games entering the state tournament, dating back to the start of the 2015 season. The 2015 Class B State Tournament MVP, she is a two-time First Team All-State selection.

Stiles has maintained a 3.73 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Malta High student council, she has volunteered locally on area beautification projects and with the Malta Food Bank.

"Sophia impacts the game on both ends as she is long, fast and has outstanding court awareness, all of which complement her high basketball IQ," said Dustin Gordon, head coach of Fairfield High. "All year she has demonstrated a much improved shooting touch and level of consistency that makes her so dangerous and extremely difficult to defend."

Stiles 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.

Stiles joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Basketball Players of the Year Taylor Goligoski (2014-15 & 2012-13, Hamilton High School), Jill Barta (2013-14, Fairfield High School), Peyton Ferris (2011-12, Twin Bridges High School), Danielle Muri (2010-11, Billings West High School), Lexie Nelson (2009-10, Butte High School), Joslyn Tinkle (2008-09 & 2007-08, Big Sky High School), and Kirsten Tilleman (2006-07, Bozeman 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.

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