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**PROVIDENCE DAY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Erin Whalen of Providence Day School as its 2015-16 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Whalen is the fifth Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Providence Day 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 Whalen 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, Whalen 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-1 senior forward led the Chargers to a 27-2 record and a seventh consecutive North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association Class 3A state championship this past season. The 2015-16 Conference of Independent Schools Athletics Association Player of the Year averaged 18.2 points, 5.7 rebounds, 1.7 steals and 1.5 assists in just 24 minutes per game. Also a two-time NCISAA Class 3A First Team All-State selection, she shot 55.5 percent from the field, 49.2 percent from 3-point range and 89.9 percent from the free-throw line.

Whalen has maintained a 3.87 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth basketball instructor and mentoring younger players in Providence Day's K-12 program, she has helped organize efforts to create and deliver "blessing bags" for the Charlotte-area homeless during the holidays.

"Clearly, Erin's athletic accomplishments speak for themselves—she is a tremendous athlete and competitor," said Jessica Kulp, head coach at rival Cannon School. "In the two years that I have coached against Erin, I have always seen her behave graciously with a genuine respect for her coach, teammates, officials, opponents, and the game itself. Erin appears to be a player that leads quietly and by example."

Whalen has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University 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.

Whalen joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Basketball Players of the Year Stephanie Watts (2014-15, Weddington High School), 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 High School), Candace Wood (2007-08, Victory Christian Center School), and Cetera DeGraffenreid (2006-07, Smoky Mountain 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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