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**MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CALIFORNIA 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 Katie Lou Samuelson of Mater Dei High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Samuelson is the third Gatorade California Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mater Dei 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 Samuelson as California'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, Samuelson 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-3 senior guard has led the Monarchs to a 28-2 record and a berth in the Open Division state tournament against Palisades, scheduled for March 13. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Basketball Player of the Year, Samuelson is averaging 29.5 points, 8.6 rebounds and 2.4 steals per game. The leading scorer for the USA Basketball Women's U17 National Team that won the FIBA World Championship in 2014, she has been selected to play in both the McDonald's All-American Game and the Jordan Brand Classic. Samuelson was also named National Player of the Year by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association and was named to USA TODAY's All-USA First Team.

Samuelson has maintained a 4.26 weighted GPA in the classroom. A volunteer coach and counselor for the Kiernan/Mater Dei Camp of Champions, she has donated her time as an assistant and entertainer at the Boo Bash Dance and Dinner for special needs children. She has also participated in multiple community service initiatives, including the Santa Ana YMCA's Tie Blanket Project, the Buddy Walk to benefit the National Down Syndrome Society and the Mater Dei Family Mass & Pancake Breakfast.

"Every time she shoots it, you think it's going in," said Craig DeBusk, head coach at Santa Margarita High. "She gets the ball off quick and has great rotation on her shot. She's also got great height and athleticism, and her overall floor game is second to none."

Samuelson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play basketball on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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 Samuelson joins Gatorade California Girls Basketball Players of the Year Erica McCall (2012-13, Ridgeview High School), Nirra Fields (2011-12, Mater Dei High School), Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis (2010-11 & 2008-09, Mater Dei High School), Chelsea Gray (2009-10, St. Mary's), Jasmine Dixon (2007-08, Long Beach Poly), and Jeanette Pohlen (2006-07, Brea Olinda) 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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