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**CULLMAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 1, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Keegan Thompson of Cullman High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cullman 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 field, distinguishes Thompson as Alabama's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Thompson joins an elite alumni association of past state baseball award winners, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot, 165-pound sophomore right-handed pitcher finished 9-3 on the mound with a 1.70 ERA this season, leading the Bearcats (45-11) to the Class 5A state championship series. A returning Honorable Mention All-State selection as named by the Alabama Sports Writers Association, Thompson recorded 123 strikeouts against just 16 walks in 82.2 innings. Also a shortstop, he recorded a .433 batting average, 66 RBI, 59 runs scored, 17 home runs and 15 doubles, producing a .940 slugging percentage and .525 on-base percentage this spring.

Thompson has maintained a 3.52 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth baseball instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the Challenger Division of Little League and as part of cleanup efforts to benefit recovery projects affected by recent tornados.

"He's the best player in the state," said William Booth, head coach of rival Hartselle High. "He throws 92-93 miles per hour, bats cleanup and plays shortstop for one of the best teams in the state. I watched him pitch against Madison Academy in the first round of the state tournament, and he struck out 15 of the 16 batters he faced. He's only a sophomore, but he's outstanding."

Thompson will begin his junior 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, 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.

Thompson joins recent Gatorade Alabama Baseball Players of the Year Daryl Norris (2009-10, Fairhope), Luke Bole (2008-09; Hartselle), Tyler Stovall (2007-08, Hokes Bluff), and Hunter Morris (2006-07, Grissom), 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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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