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Contact: Adam Woullard (312) 729-3627

**BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Chelsea Abbott of Bellows Free Academy as its 2010-11 Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year. Abbott is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellows Free Academy.

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 Abbott as Vermont's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Abbott joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alicia Hollowell (2000-01, Fairfield HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Angela Tincher (2002-03, James River HS, Va.) and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro HS, Ariz.).

The 5-foot-10 junior right-handed pitcher has led the Bobwhites (17-0) to the upcoming Div. I finals against Brattleboro. At the time of her selection, Abbott owned a 14-0 record on the mound with a 0.97 ERA and 168 strikeouts in 94 innings pitched. A two-time First Team All-Metro selection, she produced 25 RBI and a school-record six home runs through 17 games.

Abbott has maintained a 3.87 GPA in the classroom. A member of the 4-H Club, she has volunteered locally as an elementary school mentor and a youth softball instructor.

"Abbott has a good fastball and a good changeup, but the rise ball is her money pitch," said Geri Witalec, head coach of rival Colchester High. "When it's on, she's really tough to hit."

Abbott 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 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.

Abbott joins recent Gatorade Vermont Softball Players of the Year Alexis Perry (2009-10, Essex) and two-time winner Stephanie Frank (2007-08 & 2008-09, Essex), 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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