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**WEST VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA GIRLS BASKETBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (March 8, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Hannah Mattson of West Valley High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Player of the Year. Mattson is the second Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Valley 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 Mattson as Alaska'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, Mattson joins an elite alumni association of past state girls basketball award-winners, including Candace Parker (2003-04, 2002-03, & 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-10 junior guard has led the Wolfpack to a 23-3 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament against West Anchorage, scheduled for March 15. Through 26 games, Mattson is averaging 15.4 points, 7.2 rebounds, 4.6 assists and 3.3 steals. A First Team All-State selection as a sophomore, she earned Mid-Alaska Conference Player of the Year honors in 2012.

Mattson has maintained a 4.03 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, youth basketball programs and community-cleanup initiatives.

"Mattson is a tough kid who plays the point but who can play all five positions," said Keenan Hollister, head coach at North Pole High. "She's extremely important to her team. The ball is always in her hands and she makes them go."

Mattson 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 ESPNHS 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.

Mattson joins recent Gatorade Alaska Girls Basketball Players of the Year Keiahna Engel (2010-11 & 2009-10, Dimond High School), Jenna Johnson (2008-09, Wasilla), Sylvia Bullock (2007-08, South Anchorage), Talisa Rhea (2006 - 07, Juneau-Douglas), Chandice Cronk (2003-04, Wasilla), and Ashley Mickens (2002-03, East Anchorage) 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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