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**SERVICE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Zach Ferntheil of Service High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year. Ferntheil is the first Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Service 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 Ferntheil as Alaska's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Ferntheil 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, 190-pound junior right-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Cougars to an 11-2 record entering the Alaska School Activities Association state tournament, scheduled to begin May 31. Ferntheil posted a 3-0 record on the mound with two saves, a 1.12 ERA and 25 strikeouts in 18.67 innings through 13 games. A 2011 First Team All-Conference selection, he also batted .423 with a 1.014 OPS in 2012.

Ferntheil has maintained a 3.20 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as a camp counselor, a peer leader in his school community and as a youth baseball coach.

"Zach Ferntheil is hands down the best pitcher in our conference," said Mark Wisthoff, head coach at West Anchorage High. "He worked really hard in the offseason and you can tell by the results. In the 10 years that I've been coaching here, I don't know that I've seen anyone better."

Ferntheil will begin his 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.

Ferntheil joins recent Gatorade Alaska Baseball Players of the Year Adam Manzer (2010-11, West Anchorage High School), Dylan Baker (2009-10, Juneau-Douglas), Ross Venneberg (2008-09; Sitka), Joe Kohan (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas), and Ryan Skillern (2006-07, South), 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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