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JESUIT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE® FLORIDA 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 **Lance McCullers of Jesuit High School** as its **2011-12 Gatorade Florida Baseball Player of the Year**. McCullers is the first Gatorade Florida Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jesuit 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 McCullers as Florida's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, McCullers 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-2, 205-pound senior right-handed pitcher posted a 13-0 record with a 0.18 ERA and 140 strikeouts against 30 walks in 77.1 innings pitched this past season, leading the Tigers (28-2) to the Class 5A state semifinals. The 2011 Jackie Robinson Award winner as the country's top rising senior, McCullers, also a shortstop, batted .280 with two home runs and 21 RBI, stealing 10 bases in 10 attempts. An All-American as named by ESPNHS, Baseball America, Perfect Game, MaxPreps and Louisville Slugger, he scored 27 runs while producing a .467 on-base percentage and .467 slugging percentage. In addition to making seven appearances for the 2010 USA Baseball 18-and-Under National Team, he also participated in the 2010 Under Armour All-America Game and 2011 Perfect Game All-American Classic.

McCullers has maintained a B average in the classroom. A volunteer on behalf of Challenger Baseball, the Special Olympics, Metropolitan Ministries, the Head Start Program and as a Bakas Equestrian Center assistant for intellectually challenged children, he has also donated his time as part of a literacy-outreach program, as a motivational speaker for middle school children and as part of multiple food drives in association with Jesuit High.

"Lance McCullers is an outstanding athlete," said David Koons, head coach at rival Blake High. "There is no doubt that he is an extreme talent on the baseball field. He is also a player that shows great respect to the players and coaches around him. He plays the game the way it's supposed to be played—with respect, class and hard-fought effort."

McCullers has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Florida this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in next month's Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft.

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.

McCullers joins recent Gatorade Florida Baseball Players of the Year Jose Fernandez (2010-11, Alonso High School), Nick Castellanos (2009-10, Archbishop McCarthy), Bobby Borcherling (2008-09; Bishop Verot Catholic), Eric Hosmer (2007-08, American Heritage School), and Michael Main (2006-07, DeLand), 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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