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**OAK FOREST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 Kyle Funkhouser of Oak Forest High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Illinois Baseball Player of the Year. Funkhouser is the first Gatorade Illinois Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Oak Forest 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 Funkhouser as Illinois' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Funkhouser 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-3, 190-pound senior right-handed pitcher led the Bengals to a 27-6 record entering the Class 3A sectional semifinals against Chicago Heights, scheduled for May 30. Through 33 games, Funkhouser owned an 11-1 record on the mound along with a 0.60 ERA, recording 119 strikeouts in 76.1 innings. He was a First Team All-State selection, the South Suburban Blue Conference Player of the Year and a Rawlings/Perfect Game First Team All-Region honoree in 2011.

Funkhouser has maintained a 3.32 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth baseball teams and an elementary school special education program.

"Funkhouser is an all-around tremendous pitcher," said Joe Rodeghero, head coach at Lemont Township High. "He throws 90-plus with a good curve and he's been dominant for three years."

Funkhouser has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Louisville 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.

Funkhouser joins recent Gatorade Illinois Baseball Players of the Year Charlie Tilson (2010-11, New Trier Township High School), Jake DePew (2009-10, Granite City), Kevin Koziol (2008-09; Brother Rice), Jake Odorizzi (2007-08, Highland), and Jake Smolinski (2006-07, Boylan Catholic), 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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