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**MILLARD WEST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Nate Griep of Millard West High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Player of the Year. Griep is the third Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Millard West 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 Griep as Nebraska's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Griep 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, 185-pound senior right-handed pitcher posted an 8-1 record with a 1.62 ERA and 76 strikeouts against 13 walks in 48 innings pitched this past season, leading the Wildcats (29-8) to the second round of the Class A state tournament. A returning First Team Omaha World-Herald All-Nebraska and Lincoln Journal Star Super-State selection, Griep, also a centerfielder, batted .407 with six home runs and 43 RBI. He scored 34 runs while producing a .704 slugging percentage and .481 on-base percentage.

Also a basketball standout, Griep has maintained a 3.50 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to participating in multiple charitable runs and fundraising efforts, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Step-Up Omaha and Hope Center for Kids community organizations.

"He has been very successful on the mound, throwing in the upper 80s and low 90s, and he is a very good hitter," said Jim Thomas, head coach at rival Papillion-La Vista. "However, I feel that probably his biggest asset is his competitiveness. He comes ready to play every day, and does it all with a lot of class. He is a great representative of how baseball should be played."

Griep has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Kansas State University 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.

Griep joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Players of the Year Casey Gillaspie (2010-11, Millard North High School), Logan Ehlers (2009-10, Nebraska City), Logan Ehlers (2008-09; Nebraska City), Kash Kalkowski (2007-08, Grand Island Senior), and Matt Freeman (2006-07, Elkhorn), 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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