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**MORTIMER JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Haylie McCleney of Mortimer Jordan High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year. McCleney is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mortimer Jordan 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 McCleney as Alabama's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, McCleney joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alicia Hollowell (2000-01, Fairfield HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Angela Tincher (2002-03, James River HS, Va.) and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro HS, Ariz.).

The 5-foot-4 senior center fielder compiled a state-record .692 batting average with nine home runs, 64 runs scored and 28 RBI this past season, leading the Blue Devils (25-18) to the Class 5A state finals. A three-time First Team All-State selection, McCleney also stole 65 bases in 66 attempts. As a junior, she was the Birmingham News Girls Metro Athlete of the Year and was named to the Super All-State team.

McCleney has maintained a 4.37 GPA in the classroom. A member of the local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, she has volunteered in her area on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

"Haylie McCleney is the most game-changing player I have ever witnessed," said John Simmons, head coach at Hayden High. "Every time she gets up she makes things happen, and you cannot get her out on the bases. Defensively, you can't hit a ball to the outfield, because she'll catch it wherever it is."

McCleney has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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.

McCleney joins recent Gatorade Alabama Softball Players of the Year Shelby Holley (2010-11, Pisgah High School), Leigh Streetman (2009-10, Hueytown), Heather Parker (2008-09, Mortimer Jordan) and Lindsey Dunlap (2007-08, Hueytown) 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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