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**WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA 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 Pauline Tufi of West Anchorage High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Alaska Softball Player of the Year. Tufi is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Anchorage 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 Tufi as Alaska's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Tufi 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-10 junior right-handed pitcher, shortstop and catcher posted a 6-3 record in 82 innings this past season leading the Eagles (20-7) to the Large School state final on the strength of a 1.25 ERA and 105 strikeouts. The 2010-11 Gatorade Alaska Softball Player of the Year, Tufi also batted .500 with 6 home runs and 30 RBI, producing a .987 slugging percentage.

Tufi has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army, the Lions Club International and the Alaskan Sled Dog & Racing Association.

"Pauline Tufi is a tremendous ballplayer and a great kid," said Andy Fowkes, head coach at South Anchorage High. "She can hurt you in so many ways on the field with both her arm and with her bat. I wish she played for me."

Tufi has verbally committed to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Northern Colorado beginning in the fall of 2013.

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.

Two-time winner Tufi joins recent Gatorade Alaska Softball Players of the Year Brittany Fenumiai (2008-09 & 2009-10, Juneau-Douglas), and Carrie Ann Laliberte (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas) 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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