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**BRYANT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARKANSAS 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 Peyton Jenkins of Bryant High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Arkansas Softball Player of the Year. Jenkins is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bryant 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 Jenkins as Arkansas' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Jenkins 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-6 senior pitcher led the Hornets (34-0) to a third straight Class 7A state championship this past season. Jenkins posted a 32-0 record with a 0.48 ERA and 260 strikeouts in 173.2 innings-pitched. She allowed 72 hits and issued 33 walks. At the plate, the three-time First Team All-State selection batted .477 with six home runs, 22 doubles, 41 RBI and a slugging percentage of .881.

Jenkins has maintained a 3.36 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach, as an aide in the Bryant High front office and with the Miracle League of Arkansas, a baseball league for physically and intellectually challenged children.

"To be able to pitch and hit is a unique combination," said Kent Early, head coach of rival Bentonville High. "It is easy to let one side of the ball affect the other. For Peyton to maintain poise in the circle and hit for some very good numbers is impressive."

Jenkins has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Central Baptist College 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.

Jenkins joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Softball Players of the Year Kimmy Beasley (2010-11, Foreman High School), Shelby Jo Fenter (2009-10, West Memphis), and Shelby Wise (2007-08 & 2008-09, Nettleton) 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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