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**SUSSEX TECH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® DELAWARE 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 Kim Smith of Sussex Tech High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Delaware Softball Player of the Year. Smith is the second Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sussex Tech 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 Smith as Delaware's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Smith 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-5 senior right-handed pitcher led the Ravens to an 18-4 record and the state championship this past season. A returning First Team All-State selection as named by The News Journal, Smith posted an 18-4 record with a 1.25 ERA and 165 strikeouts against 26 walks in 140.1 innings-pitched. Also a returning First Team All-Henlopen Conference honoree, Smith batted .554 with 11 doubles and 11 RBI. She produced a .723 slugging percentage and .655 on-base percentage.

Smith has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. A Skills USA participant and peer leader in her school, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Little League Baseball, the Audrey Spicer Trust Fund, a juvenile rehabilitation center and as a fundraiser to benefit cancer research.

"Kim Smith is a threat with the bat," said Jennifer Bradshaw, head coach at rival Poly Tech High. "Her hitting really stands out. She's primarily a shortstop—that's what she's been recruited for—but she's able to pitch, too. She does a great job keeping hitters mixed up, and that helps Sussex Tech be very successful."

Smith has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Hofstra 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.

Smith joins recent three-time winner Gatorade Delaware Softball Players of the Year Rachel Gillen (2008-09, 2009-10 & 2010-11, Archmere Academy), and Erika Brittingham (2007-08, Sussex Central) 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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