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**OLATHE EAST HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Allison Stewart of Olathe East High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year. Stewart is the fourth Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Olathe East 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 Stewart as Kansas' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Stewart 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-11 sophomore pitcher led the Hawks (24-1) to the Class 6A state championship this past season. Stewart batted .532 with five home runs, a school-record 52 RBI and a slugging percentage of .873. In the circle, the First Team All-Sunflower League selection posted a 13-0 record with a 0.20 ERA and 118 strikeouts in 69.1 innings-pitched. She allowed 28 hits, issued nine walks and recorded two no-hitters.

Stewart has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Olathe East 21st Century Leadership Program, she has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, as a youth mentor and as a youth softball coach.

"Allison Stewart has the mental toughness that allows her to perform and deal with pressure every single pitch defensively and turn around on the offensive side and perform at the plate," said Jan Kushner, head coach of rival Shawnee Mission North High. "This year, she was phenomenal."

Stewart has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Arkansas on an athletic scholarship beginning in the fall of 2014.

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.

Stewart joins recent Gatorade Kansas Softball Players of the Year Shelby Davis (2010-11, Goddard High School), Kelsey Stewart (2009-10, Arkansas City), Nikki Armagost (2008-09, Andover Central) and Paige Ladenburger (2007-08, Washburn Rural) 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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