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**BEATRICE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEBRASKA 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 Alicia Armstrong of Beatrice High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year. Armstrong is the second Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Beatrice 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 Armstrong as Nebraska's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Armstrong 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 senior shortstop finished with a state-record .690 batting average this past season along with six home runs, 46 runs-scored, 27 RBI and 32 stolen bases, leading the Lady Orange (25-7) to the Class B state final. Captain of the Lincoln Journal Star Super-State team, Armstrong was also a member of the Omaha World-Herald All-Nebraska Team. She owns or shares six state records, including highest career batting average (.514).

Armstrong has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. President of her senior class, she has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and blood-donation drives.

"Armstrong is the kind of special athlete who doesn't come around very often," said Shawn Carr, head coach at Crete High. "If she doesn't hit the ball to the wall for extra bases, she can just steal second base every time. Defensively, she played shortstop as well as anyone I've seen."

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

Armstrong joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Softball Players of the Year Allie Mathewson (2010-11, Papillion-La Vista South High School), Becca Changstrom (2008-09 & 2009-10, Lincoln Southwest), and Ashley Hagemann (2007-08, Elkhorn) 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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