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**CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEVADA 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 Heather Bowen of Centennial High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Nevada Softball Player of the Year. Bowen is the second Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Centennial 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 Bowen as Nevada's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Bowen 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 sophomore shortstop led the Bulldogs (34-8) to the Class 4A state championship this past season. Bowen batted .480 with 60 runs scored, 54 RBI and a school-record 16 home runs. She is a First Team All-State selection and the Las Vegas Review-Journal Class 4A Player of the Year.

Bowen has maintained a 3.81 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally feeding the homeless and as a youth softball instructor.

"You have to give Bowen a tremendous amount of respect when she's at the plate," said Jon Wunder, head coach at Reed High. "Her sheer numbers are amazing. Defensively, she's very strong too, with a cannon for an arm."

Bowen will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Bowen joins recent Gatorade Nevada Softball Players of the Year Melissa McCormick (2010-11, Palo Verde High School), Karlyn Jones (2009-10, Spanish Springs), Chelsea Cohen (2008-09, Reed) and Mallary Darby (2007-08, Spanish Springs) 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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