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**JENKS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OKLAHOMA 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 Darcy Taylor of Jenks High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Oklahoma Softball Player of the Year. Taylor is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jenks 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 Taylor as Oklahoma's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Taylor 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 6-foot senior right-handed pitcher and first baseman posted a 28-5 record in the circle along with a 1.93 ERA and 160 strikeouts in 199 innings this past season, leading the Trojans (36-5) to the Class 6A state tournament. The 2011 Tulsa World Softball Player of the Year, Taylor also batted .504 with 17 home runs, 64 RBI and a 1.133 slugging percentage.

Taylor has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. An officer in her school's student council, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank and as part of fundraising efforts to benefit Susan G. Komen for the Cure cancer research.

"Darcy Taylor is one of the best high school players that I have seen in many years," said Matt Cloud, head coach at Tahlequah High. "She is probably the most powerful hitter I have seen and her physical prowess absolutely intimidates opposing pitchers. She hits the ball farther than a lot of high school boys."

Taylor has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Arizona 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.

Taylor joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Softball Players of the Year Whitney Robinson (2010-11, Carl Albert High School), Ashley Paxton (2009-10, Mustang), Chelsea Lyon (2008-09, Broken Arrow Senior) and Kasha Kolb (2007-08, Chelsea) 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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