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**JOHN MARSHALL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Kylie Howard of John Marshall High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade West Virginia Softball Player of the Year. Howard is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from John Marshall 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 Howard as West Virginia's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Howard 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-6 junior shortstop led the Monarchs (35-4) to the Class AAA state championship this past season. Howard batted .475 with 52 runs scored, five home runs, 15 doubles, eight triples, and 55 RBI. She is a three-time First Team All-State selection and was named to the 2012 All-State Tournament team.

Howard has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. Also a basketball standout, she is a devoted member of her church youth group and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs.

"Howard is a very good hitter and she has good speed when she gets on base," said Lorri Lipscomb, head coach at Morgantown High. "She also has a great arm and she makes all the catches in the field."

Howard will begin her senior 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.

Howard joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Softball Players of the Year Ashley Knight (2010-11, Ritchie County High School), Samantha Snodgrass (2009-10, St. Albans), Andi Williamson (2008-09, Chapmanville Regional) and Kiarra Chappelle (2007-08, Huntington) 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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