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**WILMOT UNION HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® WISCONSIN SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Kristen Wood of Wilmot Union High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Wisconsin Softball Player of the Year. Wood is the first Gatorade Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wilmot Union 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 Wood as Wisconsin's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Wood 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 led the Panthers to a 21-3 record entering the Division 1 sectional semifinals, scheduled for June 4. A two-time returning First Team All-State selection as named by the Wisconsin Fastpitch Softball Coaches Association, Wood owned a 21-3 record with a 0.85 ERA and 286 strikeouts in 149 innings-pitched through 24 games. Also a first baseman, Wood batted .462 with six home runs and 35 RBI, producing a .782 slugging percentage and .512 on-base percentage entering the sectional semis.

Wood has maintained a 3.40 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth softball instructor and umpire, she has volunteered locally at a no-kill animal shelter, on behalf of her church and as part of multiple fundraisers for both cancer and diabetes research.

"She has been by far one of the best pitchers I have ever seen in the area, state and country," said Hank Johnson, head coach at rival Delavan-Darien High. "She has multiple pitches that she can consistently throw for strikes. Kristen is also one of the best hitters in our league, which makes her a complete player. She has recorded a lot of wins over the years and has demonstrated great character in never showing up her opponents while on the field."

Wood has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Northwestern University 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.

Wood joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Softball Players of the Year Lauren Danner (2010-11, Kaukauna High School), McKinzie Freimuth (2009-10, Kaukauna), Claudia Harke (2008-09, Kimberly) and Alyssa Roberts (2007-08, Bradford) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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