

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)**

**CULLMAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® ALABAMA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 28, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Keegan Thompson of Cullman High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cullman 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 Thompson as Alabama's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Thompson joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derrek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-2, 205-pound senior right-handed pitcher owned a 9-2 record with two saves, a 1.25 ERA and 124 strikeouts against just eight walks in 72.2 innings-pitched this past season, leading the Bearcats (31-19) to the second round of the Class 5A state tournament. The state's 2010-11 Gatorade Baseball Player of the Year as a sophomore, Thompson batted .420 with nine home runs, 19 doubles, 35 runs scored and 43 RBI. Also an infielder, he owned a .536 on-base percentage and a .740 slugging percentage.

Thompson has maintained a 3.60 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and his school's Key Club International chapter, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, The Miracle League and the Children's Advocacy Center of Cullman. Thompson has also donated his time to area youth as a baseball instructor and as part of a literacy-outreach initiative.

"He's unbeatable," said William Booth, head coach of rival Hartselle High. "His work ethic is unquestionable—the best of anybody. He's dedicated his life to baseball. I wish he were at Hartselle. We've had some great games with them, and he's the reason that Cullman has been where they've been the last four years. There's not one better. Not in Alabama. He's that good."

Thompson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Auburn University this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in next month's Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft.

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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Two-time winner Thompson joins recent Gatorade Alabama Baseball Players of the Year Mikey White (2011-12, Spain Park High School), Daryl Norris (2009-10, Fairhope), Luke Bole (2008-09 Hartselle), Tyler Stovall (2007-08, Hokes Bluff), and Hunter Morris (2006-2007, Grissom) 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 [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###