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**MASUK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Tatum Buckley of Masuk High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year. Buckley is the second Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Masuk 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 Buckley as Connecticut's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Buckley 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 right-handed pitcher led the Panthers to a 25-0 record entering the Class L state semifinals against Berlin High, scheduled for June 4. Buckley owned a 25-0 record with a 0.31 ERA and 271 strikeouts against only 14 walks in 157 innings-pitched entering the postseason round of four. She hurled 19 shutouts through 25 games. A two-time returning Class L First Team All-State selection as named by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, Buckley also batted .546 with six home runs, 19 doubles and 27 RBI. She produced a .635 on-base percentage and 1.026 slugging percentage.

Buckley has maintained a 3.44 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to serving as manager of the school's field hockey team, she has donated her time as a youth softball and basketball instructor.

"She's tremendous on the field," said Mike Siksay, head coach of rival Bunnell High. "She wins with dignity and carries herself with confidence. We had a few hits off her, which was surprising, and she didn't get rattled one bit. She's a tough opponent. I've become a fan of her when we're not playing against her. She's very formidable. She deserves every recognition she can get. She's unbelievable."

Buckley has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at Florida Atlantic University beginning in the fall of 2014.

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.

Buckley joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Softball Players of the Year Kelli Connors (2011-12, Waterford High School), Brianna Turgeon (2010-11 & 2009-10, Fitch High School), Rachele Fico (2008-09 & 2007-08, Masuk), and Lauren Bespuda (2006 - 07, Amity) 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.

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