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**NORTHERN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MARYLAND 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 Jess Cummings of Northern High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Maryland Softball Player of the Year. Cummings is the third Gatorade Maryland Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Northern 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 Cummings as Maryland's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Cummings 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 returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 5-foot-8 junior right-handed pitcher led the Patriots (23-0) to their sixth straight Class 3A state championship this past season. Cummings posted a 22-0 record with a 0.00 ERA and 298 strikeouts in 135 innings pitched. She threw nine no-hitters including two perfect games and held opponents to a .041 batting average, allowing one run all season. At the plate, the 2012 Washington Post All-Met First Team selection hit .250 with 11 RBI.

Cummings has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of the Northern High Key Club, she has volunteered as part of Christmas in April, which benefits needy senior citizens, and as a youth softball coach.

"It's hard to believe but Jess is a much-improved pitcher over a year ago," said Tommy Orndorff, head coach of Bishop O'Connell (Va.) High. "She has good velocity and excellent movement on her pitches. She's special—just an awesome competitor in the circle."

Cummings has made a verbal commitment to play softball on an athletic scholarship at Penn State 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.

Cummings joins Gatorade Maryland Softball Players of the Year Kaitlyn Schmeiser (2010-11, Northern High School), Kourtney Salvarola (2009-10, Broadneck), Melanie Mitchell (2008-09, McDonough), Lauren Gibson (2007-08, Chesapeake), and Kerry Hickey (2006 - 07, Huntingtown) 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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