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**MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MASSACHUSETTS SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 6, 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 Shannon Smith of Milford High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year. Smith is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Milford 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 Smith as Massachusetts's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Smith 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 state's 2009-10 and 2011-12 Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Smith led the Scarlet Hawks to a 21-1 record entering the Division 1 South quarterfinals against King Philip High, scheduled for June 4. The 5-foot-7 senior right-handed pitcher owned a 20-1 record with a 0.05 ERA and 293 strikeouts against only six walks in 138 innings-pitched entering the sectional round of eight. The three-time returning Mid-Wach A League MVP batted .486 with seven home runs and 29 RBI through 22 games. Smith led Milford to the 2012 Division 1 state title as a junior. Her 1,154 career strikeouts are a state record.

Smith has maintained a 3.64 GPA in the classroom and has served as her school's student council secretary. In addition to donating her time as a youth softball instructor, she has volunteered on behalf of her church's youth group, the Special Olympics and in association with the National Honor Society.

"She is headed to Kentucky and has the make-up to be successful in the SEC," said Denise Davis, owner of Planet Fastpitch. "Plus, she is a tremendous human. Her passions off of the field include volunteering at the Special Olympics and tutoring at her high school. She is a junior instructor at PFP, a great student and a superior role model. She has helped me guide hundreds of kids with her example. She's a 360-degree player and person. Honestly, I hope she's in the running for National Player of the Year."

Smith has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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 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.

Smith joins Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Players of the Year Emma Mendoker (2010-11, Amherst Regional High School), Nicole D'Argento (2008-09 & 2007-08, Ashland) and Kara Nilan (2006 - 07, Taconic) 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).

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