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**STILLWATER AREA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MINNESOTA 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 Hannah Heacox of Stillwater Area High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Minnesota Softball Player of the Year. Heacox is the first Gatorade Minnesota Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Stillwater Area 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 Heacox as Minnesota's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Heacox 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-2 senior right-handed pitcher has led Stillwater to a 19-3 record entering the Class AAA state tournament, scheduled to begin June 6. Heacox owned a 14-2 record with one save, a 0.80 ERA and 194 strikeouts in 114.1 innings-pitched entering the postseason round of eight. A Class AAA First Team All-State selection as named by the Minnesota Fastpitch Coaches Association, Heacox also batted .346 with two home runs and nine RBI through 22 games. She led Stillwater to the 2012 Class AAA state championship as a junior and captured Most Outstanding Pitcher honors at the 2011 USSSA Fastpitch World Series.

Also a swimming and ice hockey standout, Heacox has maintained a 3.80 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as part of multiple food drives for the needy, at Stillwater's Lumberjack Days celebration, in association with the National Honor Society and as a youth athletic instructor on behalf of the school's Pony Pals initiative.

"She's a fierce competitor," said Frank Roth, head coach of rival Mounds View High. "She's not physically intimidating, but she's worked very hard at her craft, and she's very good at it. She's very poised. From everything I've seen of her on the field, it would be a privilege to have someone like that on my team. This season, as well as she's done, she's gone through a lot of adversity."

Heacox has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball and hockey on scholarship at Gustavus Adolphus College 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.

Heacox joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Softball Players of the Year Nikki Anderson (2011-12, Brainerd High School), Kelsey Anderson (2010-11, Burnsville High School), Sara Moulton (2009-10 & (2008-09, Eagan), Chelsey Durland (2007-08, Orono), and Brynne Dordel (2006 - 07, Chaska) 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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