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**GROVE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® OKLAHOMA 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 Jessica Walker of Grove High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Oklahoma Softball Player of the Year. Walker is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Grove 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 Walker as Oklahoma's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Walker 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-8 senior right-handed pitcher led the Ridgerunners (28-5) to the Class 5A state championship this past season. Walker posted a 25-3 record with a 0.59 ERA and 278 strikeouts in 178 innings pitched. A 2012 First Team All-State selection, she also batted .388 with three home runs, 21 RBI and a .565 slugging percentage.

Walker has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, a women's shelter and the Children's Hospital at St. Francis in Tulsa.

"Jessica Walker is such a great competitor," said Matt Cloud, head coach at Tahlequah High. "She's someone we just couldn't beat. She would definitely be the most dominant pitcher we've seen. She a great pitcher and hitter and she gets it done in the classroom."

Walker has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the Jacksonville University 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.

Walker joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Softball Players of the Year Darcy Taylor (2011-12, Jenks High School), Whitney Robinson (2010-11, Carl Albert High School), Ashley Paxton (2009-10, Mustang), Chelsea Lyon (2008-09, Broken Arrow Senior), Kasha Kolb (2007-08, Chelsea), and Misty Flesher (2006 - 07, Lone Grove) 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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