

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**BRATTLEBORO UNION HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Kayla Wood of Brattleboro Union High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year. Wood is the first Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Brattleboro Union 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 Wood as Vermont's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Wood 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-5 senior right-handed pitcher led the Colonels to a 13-2-1 record entering their Division I state tournament game against North Country Union, scheduled for June 4. Wood owned a 12-2 record with a 0.46 ERA entering the postseason, striking out 166 batters with just 16 walks and 51 hits allowed in 106.2 innings pitched. A four-time All-Marble Valley League selection, she has won two state titles at Brattleboro.

Wood has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth softball and field hockey programs.

"I can't think of anyone who is more important to her team or more dominant in the circle than Kayla Wood," said Andy Bladyka, head coach at Springfield High. "She's also a very good hitter."

Wood will attend Castleton State College this fall, where she will play softball.

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.

Wood joins recent Gatorade Vermont Softball Players of the Year Alexis Perry (2011-12, Essex High School), Chelsea Abbott (2010-11, Bellows Free Academy), Alexis Perry (2009-10, Essex), Stephanie Frank (2008-09 & 2007-08, Essex), and Amanda Downey (2006 - 07, Essex) 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.

###