

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**CONNELL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® WASHINGTON 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 Ashley Thompson of Connell High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Connell 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 Thompson as Washington's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Thompson 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 6-foot-2 senior right-handed pitcher led the Eagles (27-0) to a third straight Class 1A state championship this past season. Thompson posted a 27-0 record with a 0.19 ERA and 345 strikeouts in 144 innings pitched. Thompson notched 11 no-hitters—including seven in a row—and allowed just 22 hits. At the plate, Thompson batted .667 with 13 home runs, 63 runs scored, 53 RBI and 48 walks, compiling an on-base percentage of .789 and a slugging percentage of 1.550. She concluded her prep career with a state-record 1,117 strikeouts in the circle and a state-record 51 home runs at the plate.

Thompson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom and will graduate as valedictorian of her high school class. The president of the Connell High National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally as a peer mentor and as a youth softball coach.

"Ashley is the most dominant player I have ever seen at any level in softball or baseball," said Tucker Urdahl, head coach of Columbia High. "Her power is amazing but her discipline and ability to not miss mistakes make her an absolutely dominating hitter. And in the circle she is nearly untouchable."

Thompson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on an athletic scholarship at Brigham Young 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.

Thompson joins recent Gatorade Washington Softball Players of the Year Madi Schreyer (2011-12, Woodinville High School), Alyson Ambler (2010-11, Walla Walla High School), Hope Klicker (2009-10, Walla Walla), Amanda Fitzsimmons (2008-09, Auburn Riverside) and Sam Skillingstad (2007-08 & 2006 - 07, Shadle Park) 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).

###