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Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Morgan Zerkle of Cabell Midland High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade West Virginia Softball Player of the Year. Zerkle is the first Gatorade West Virginia Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cabell Midland 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 Zerkle as West Virginia's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Zerkle 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-7 senior third baseman led the Knights (26-6) to the Class AAA regional semifinals this past season. Zerkle batted .651 with 61 runs scored, four home runs, eight triples and 23 RBI. She is the Mountain State Athletic Conference Player of the Year and a two-time First Team All-State selection.

Zerkle has maintained a 4.62 GPA in the classroom. An active member of her church youth group, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Ronald McDonald House Charities, the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program and assisted living facilities.

"Morgan Zerkle is a nightmare to coach against," said Allison Webb, head coach at Spring Valley High. "She can do it all at the plate, and on defense she has the quickness, arm strength and grit that every coach tries to get out of a third baseman."

Zerkle has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Marshall 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.

Zerkle joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Softball Players of the Year Kylie Howard (2011-12, John Marshall High School), Ashley Knight (2010-11, Ritchie County High School), Samantha Snodgrass (2009-10, St. Albans), Andi Williamson (2008-09, Chapmanville Regional), Kiarra Chappelle (2007-08, Huntington), and Margaret Osborne (2006 - 07, St. Albans) 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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