

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**MASUK HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Tatum Buckley of Masuk High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year. Buckley is the second Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Masuk 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 Buckley as Connecticut's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Buckley 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-6 senior right-handed pitcher compiled a 19-3 record and a 0.10 ERA in the circle for the Panthers (19-3) at the time of her selection. The state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Buckley fanned 295 batters against just six walks in 144 innings pitched. A three-time returning Class L First Team All-State selection as named by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, Buckley owned a .475 batting average with 13 extra-base hits and 24 RBI entering the second round of the Class L state tournament. She led Masuk to a 27-0 record and the 2013 Class L state championship as a junior.

Buckley has maintained a 3.34 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to serving as manager of the school's field hockey team, she has donated her time as a youth softball and basketball instructor.

"Tatum Buckley has always had a burning passion for the sport of softball while also having that same passion in representing her family, team and community with the utmost of character," said Masuk head coach Jacqueline Sheftz. "She is a person of high integrity, respects all, loyal to her family, friends and teammates, and always accepts responsibility. She is a reliable, dependable and an accountable teammate who is admired by all."

Buckley has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Florida Atlantic 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.

Two-time winner Buckley joins Gatorade Connecticut Softball Players of the Year Kelli Connors (2011-12, Waterford High School), Brianna Turgeon (2010-11 & 2009-10, Fitch High School), Rachele Fico (2008-09 & 2007-08, Masuk), and Lauren Bespuda (2006-07, Amity) 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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