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**BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY-FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Kayla Mathieu of Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax as its 2013-14 Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year. Mathieu is the first Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax.

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 Mathieu 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, Mathieu 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 junior right-handed pitcher has led the Bullets to a 16-0 record and the third seed in the Division 2 state tournament. Mathieu owned a 9-0 record and a 0.26 ERA in the circle entering the postseason, along with a .610 batting average and 22 RBI. A two-time First Team All-Mountain Division selection, she fanned 116 batters in 54 innings through 16 games, scattering 12 walks and 16 hits.

Mathieu has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Girls & Boys Clubs of America and youth softball programs.

"Mathieu is one of the best pitchers I've seen in 15 years of coaching," said Jen Gross, head coach at Richford High. "She's very dominant on the mound. She's got a nice riseball, nice change-up, moves the ball around very well. She also really helps herself out as a hitter."

Mathieu will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Mathieu joins recent Gatorade Vermont Softball Players of the Year Kayla Wood (2012-13, Brattleboro Union High School), Alexis Perry (2011-12 & 2009-10, Essex High School), Chelsea Abbott (2010-11, Bellows Free Academy), 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.

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