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**DOWNERS GROVE NORTH HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS 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 Dale Ryndak of Downers Grove North High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year. Ryndak is the first Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Downers Grove North 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 Ryndak as Illinois's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Ryndak 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, first baseman and outfielder compiled a 22-1 record and a 0.23 ERA in the circle for the Trojans (28-2-1) entering the Class 4A sectional semifinals. Through 31 games, Ryndak fanned 218 batters and issued just 10 walks in 153 innings pitched. At the time of her selection, she owned a .451 batting average with 27 extra-base hits, 38 runs scored and 41 RBI. She was a 2012 Second Team All-State honoree as named by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times and Illinois Coaches Association.

Ryndak has maintained a 3.84 weighted GPA in the classroom. A member of the German National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally as a peer tutor and youth softball instructor as well as at a retirement facility and the West Suburban Humane Society.

"In my opinion, no other player has carried their team like Dale Ryndak," said Mary McGrane, head coach of rival Glenbard West High. "She is a fierce competitor, whether she is in the circle, playing first base or hitting. She plays the game like it's supposed to be played—hard, competitive and without fear. As an opposing coach, I respect the way she plays the game."

Ryndak has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Arizona State 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.

Ryndak joins recent Gatorade Illinois Softball Players of the Year Abby Ramirez (2012-13, Trinity High School), Lilly Fecho (2011-12, Glenbard North High School), Brianna LeBeau (2010-11, Richards High School), Kirsten Verdun (2009-10, Coal City), Emily Norton (2008-09, Oak Forest), Stephanie Kirkpatrick (2007-08, Plainfield Central), and Suzie Rzegocki (2006-07, Lemont) 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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