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**NEWTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MISSISSIPPI 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 Darby Bishop of Newton County High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Mississippi Softball Player of the Year. Bishop is the second Gatorade Mississippi Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Newton County 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 Bishop as Mississippi's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Bishop 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 led the Cougars to a 34-4 record and a second consecutive Class 4A state championship this past season. Named the state's 2014 Miss Softball by The Clarion-Ledger, Bishop compiled a 21-0 record with a 1.53 ERA and 77 strikeouts in 119 innings pitched. Also a third baseman, she batted .621 with 29 extra-base hits, 44 RBI and 52 runs scored.

Bishop has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a youth softball instructor, she has volunteered locally as a peer tutor.

"She is a winner," said Newton County head coach Justin Chaney. "She always does what is best for the team. I love the way Darby carries herself on and off the field."

Bishop 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.

Bishop joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Softball Players of the Year Rachel Hickman (2012-13, Poplarville High School), Kelly Young (2011-12, Madison Central High School), Emily Davis (2010-11, Newton County High School), Londen Ladner (2009-10 & 2008-09, Northwest Rankin), and Whitney Kiihnl (2007-08 & 2006-07, South Panola) 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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