

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**NORTH SMITHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Karissa Carlton of North Smithfield High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year. Carlton is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Smithfield 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 Carlton as Rhode Island's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Carlton 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-4 senior right-handed pitcher posted a 16-1 record along with a 0.72 ERA in the circle this past season, leading the Lady Northmen (16-1) to the Division II state tournament. Carlton struck out 170 batters and walked just 17 in 97 innings pitched. A 2013 Rhode Island Coaches Association First Team All-State selection, she allowed just 46 hits, firing two no-hitters, including a perfect game.

Carlton has maintained a B average in the classroom. A competitive equestrian rider, she has volunteered locally using horsemanship to provide therapeutic services to children and adults with developmental disorders.

"Karissa Carlton is hands down the best pitcher I have seen since the pitching rubber was moved back to the college distance of 43 feet," said Bill Aquilante, head coach of Pilgrim High. "She has complete command of the strike zone and makes you chase her pitch once she gets ahead."

Carlton will attend the University of Rhode Island 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.

Carlton joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Players of the Year Lindsay Mayer (2012-13 & 2011-12, Lincoln High School), Alyssa McCoart (2010-11, Lincoln High School), Elise Fortier (2009-10, Coventry), Fallon Scorpio (2008-09, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Steph Morse (2007-08 & 2006-07, Warwick Veterans) 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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