

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)

**BAKER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 4, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Lacey Sumerlin of Baker High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year. Sumerlin is the first Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Baker 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 Sumerlin as Alabama's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Sumerlin 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-11 senior shortstop and right-handed pitcher led the Honeybees (50-6-1) to the Class 7A state championship this past season. Sumerlin finished with a .435 batting, including 12 home runs and 68 RBI, along with a 22-1 record and a 1.35 ERA in the circle. A First Team All-State selection and the Coastal Alabama Player of the Year, she slugged 16 doubles, five triples, 30 stolen bases and 71 runs scored.

Sumerlin has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a nursing home and youth sports programs.

"Sumerlin is a phenomenal athlete," said Brenda Box, head coach at Mary G. Montgomery High. "Her offensive stats speak for themselves, and at shortstop she is extremely quick and has a great arm. She started pitching as a senior and became a powerhouse there too."

Sumerlin has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Georgia 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.

Sumerlin joins recent Gatorade Alabama Softball Players of the Year Holly Ward (2013-14, Haleyville High School), Kasey Cooper (2012-13, Dothan High School), Haylie McCleney (2011-12, Mortimer Jordan High School), Shelby Holley (2010-11, Pisgah High School), Leigh Streetman (2009-10, Hueytown), Heather Parker (2008-09, Mortimer Jordan), Lindsey Dunlap (2007-08, Hueytown), and Meghan Harbuck (2006-07, Baker) 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.

###