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**PAYSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA 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 Arissa Paulson of Payson High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year. Paulson is the first Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Payson 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 Paulson as Arizona's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Paulson 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-10 junior right-hander posted a 26-2 record in the circle along with a 0.41 ERA this past season, leading the Longhorns (34-2) to the Division III state championship game. Paulson struck out 375 batters in 170 innings pitched, allowing just 64 hits and 19 walks. The Division III, Section V Player of the Year, she recorded 18 shutouts, including six no-hitters. At the plate, Paulson batted .544 with 11 home runs and 59 RBI. She finished the year with a .580 on-base percentage and a 1.097 slugging percentage.

Paulson has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with Big Brothers Big Sisters and as a youth soccer and softball coach. She has also donated her time to an elementary school literacy-outreach program.

"We have faced Arissa for three years and she is one of the best players I have ever seen," said Kelli Fifelski, head coach of Winslow High. "She is an amazing player."

Paulson has made a verbal commitment to play softball on an athletic scholarship at Brigham Young University beginning in the fall of 2016.

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.

Paulson joins recent Gatorade Arizona Softball Players of the Year Bre Macha (2013-14, Red Mountain High School), Valerie Kaff (2012-13, Mountain View High School), Kayla Bonstrom (2011-12, Canyon del Oro High School), Mattie Fowler (2010-11, Canyon del Oro High School), Dallas Escobedo (2009-10, St. Mary's Catholic), and Kenzie Fowler (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Canyon del Oro) 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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