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**FITCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT 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 Caroline Taber of Fitch High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year. Taber is the second Gatorade Connecticut Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fitch 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 Taber as Connecticut's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Taber 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-8 junior right-handed pitcher led the Falcons to a 22-0 record, an Eastern Connecticut Conference title and the No. 1 seed in the Class L state tournament at the time of her selection. A two-time Connecticut High School Coaches Association Class L First Team All-State honoree, Taber posted a 19-0 record with a 0.12 ERA and 210 strikeouts against just eight walks in 121 innings pitched through 22 games. Also a first baseman, Taber batted .415 with nine extra-base hits, 30 RBI and 30 runs scored, recording a .484 on-base percentage and .561 slugging percentage entering the postseason. The New London Day's 2014 All-Area Player of the Year, she led Fitch to the 2014 Class L state title as a sophomore.

Also a member of the debate team, Taber has maintained a 4.28 weighted GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 2 in her graduating class and has served as the fundraising chair for her school's student government. In addition to donating her time as a peer tutor and youth softball instructor, she has also volunteered on behalf of the National Honor Society and at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital.

"Caroline Taber is absolutely awesome," said Liz Sutman, head coach of rival Waterford High. "Fitch is a great program, and obviously she's a huge part of that program. She's a dominant pitcher and dominant hitter. She's at the top of her class academically. She's a class act. She's a great girl and an awesome player. She's a hard worker. She's everything. She encompasses the whole thing."

Taber 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.

Taber joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Softball Players of the Year Tatum Buckley (2013-14 & 2012-13, Masuk High School), Kelli Connors (2011-12, Waterford High School), Brianna Turgeon (2010-11 & 2009-10, Fitch High School), Rachele Fico (2008-09 & 2007-08, Masuk), and Lauren Bepuda (2006-07, Amity) 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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