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**RIO RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW MEXICO 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 BreOnna Castaneda of Rio Rancho High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New Mexico Softball Player of the Year. Castaneda is the first Gatorade New Mexico Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Rio Rancho 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 Castaneda as New Mexico's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Castaneda 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 junior shortstop led the Rams (23-8) to the Class 6A state championship this past season. Castaneda owned a .558 batting average with nine home runs, 41 runs scored and 48 RBI. A two-time First Team All-Metro honoree, she also posted a .617 on-base percentage and stole 25 bases. Castaneda was a Second Team All-State selection as a sophomore.

Castaneda has maintained a 3.83 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth softball programs.

"Castaneda covers a lot of ground defensively and she can hit the ball well too," said Ashley Carter, head coach at La Cueva High. "She's quiet, but she's been a very good leader for that team. She's been a consistent player for four years."

Castaneda 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.

Castaneda joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Softball Players of the Year Nicole Pendley (2013-14, Rio Rancho High School), Jasmine Casados (2012-13, La Cueva High School), Katera Eltsosie (2011-12, Volcano Vista High School), Karysta Donisthorpe (2010-11, Piedra Vista High School), Karysta Donisthorpe (2009-10, Piedra Vista High School), Melissa Martinez (2008-09 & 2007-08, Cibola High School), and Karisa Medrano (2006-07, St. Pius X High School) 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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