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**NIAGARA FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEW YORK 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 Toni Polk of Niagara Falls High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade New York Softball Player of the Year. Polk is the first Gatorade New York Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Niagara Falls 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 Polk as New York's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Polk 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-5 senior shortstop led the Wolverines to a 12-3 record and the sectional tournament this past season. Polk produced a .532 batting average with 12 RBI and 16 runs scored. A two-time All-State honoree and the two-time Niagara Frontier Player of the Year, she is rated as the nation's No. 28 player in the Class of 2015 by Full Count Softball.

Polk has maintained an A average in the classroom. A devoted member of her church choir and the school's Increase the Peace club, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc.

"Polk excels at everything she does," said Julie Kwoka, head coach at Lockport High. "She can do anything at the plate: bunt, slap, hit for power, you name it. She doesn't miss much in the field, and her speed and instinct on the bases are exceptional. She's one of the top players I have coached against over the 27 years that I've been coaching softball."

Polk has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Penn State University 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.

Polk joins recent Gatorade New York Softball Players of the Year Julia DiMartino (2013-14, Brockport High School), Sydney O'Hara (2012-13, Cicero-North Syracuse High School), Kristen Brown (2011-12, MacArthur High School), Marissa Diescher (2010-11, Livingston Manor High School), Tammy Wray (2009-10, Somers High School), Olivia Galati (2008-09, Saint John the Baptist Diocesan High School), Cassie Reilly-Boccia (2007-08, Yorktown High School), and Chelsea Plimpton (2006-07, Williamsville South 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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