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**CAPE FEAR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Mary Williams of Cape Fear High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year. Williams is the first Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Cape Fear 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 Williams as North Carolina's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Williams 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 senior right-hander led the Colts to a 23-1 record and the fourth round of the Class 4A playoffs this past season. Williams posted a 21-1 record and a 0.12 ERA in the circle, along with a .506 batting average, seven home runs and 52 RBI. A MaxPreps Underclass All-American, the Mid-South Player of the Year and the Class 4A East Pitcher of the Year, she struck out 235 batters in 121.1 innings pitched while surrendering just 26 hits and issuing only 15 walks. Seventeen of her victories were by shutout.

Williams has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army and an assisted living facility.

"Williams is a great pitcher who also hits the ball very well," said Stuart Gilmer, head coach at Grays Creek High. "She throws really hard, she's got a good changeup and she's got a rise ball that just takes off. And she can put every pitch wherever she wants it to go."

Williams has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at East Carolina 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.

Williams joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Softball Players of the Year Vada Sherrill (2013-14, Alexander Central High School), Lexi Shubert (2012-13, Fred T. Foard High School), Lexi Davis (2011-12, Porter Ridge High School), Chelsea Wilkinson (2010-11 & 2009-10, Alexander Central High School), Tisha Mahon (2008-09, North Davidson), Chelsea Leonard (2007-08, Central Davidson), and Ashton Ward (2006-07, Butler) 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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