

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Hayley Busby of Sandra Day O'Connor High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year. Busby is the first Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sandra Day O'Connor 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 Busby 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, Busby 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-7 junior third baseman compiled a .540 batting average with 14 home runs and 68 RBI this past season, leading the Eagles (28-11) to the semifinals of Division I state tournament in the one-loss elimination bracket. A two-time First Team All-Division I selection, Busby banged out 26 doubles and scored 42 runs. She finished the season with a .574 on-base percentage and a 1.105 slugging percentage.

Busby has maintained a weighted 4.25 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Humane Society as well as distributing blankets to the homeless. She has also donated her time as a youth softball coach and mentor.

"Hayley Busby is both a defensive and offensive threat," said Kara Holtorf, head coach of Liberty High. "She really seems to be a leader on the field for her team. She is the total package."

Busby has made a verbal commitment to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Virginia beginning in the fall of 2017.

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.

Busby joins recent Gatorade Arizona Softball Players of the Year Arissa Paulson (2014-15, Payson High School), 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 High School), and Kenzie Fowler (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Canyon del Oro 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.

###