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**FITCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® CONNECTICUT 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 Caroline Taber of Fitch High School as its 2015-16 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 state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Taber led the Falcons to a 23-0 record and the No. 1 seed in the Class L state tournament at the time of her selection. The 5-foot-8 senior right-handed pitcher posted a 15-0 record with a 0.22 ERA and 175 strikeouts and issued just three walks in 94 innings pitched entering the postseason. Also a first baseman, Taber batted .436 with 15 extra-base hits, 25 RBI and 29 runs scored, recording a .561 on-base percentage and .890 slugging percentage through 23 games. A three-time Class L First Team All-State selection as named by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, she led Fitch to the 2014 Class L state championship 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 volunteered on behalf of the National Honor Society and at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital.

"She is the most dominant pitcher I have seen in Connecticut high school softball in the 20 years I have coached," said Jason Gerum, head coach at rival Woodstock Academy. "In my opinion we have had some great ones that have become dominant over the course of their careers and moved on to the highest levels of college play, but Caroline however has been dominant from day one in her freshman year to today."

Taber will attend Princeton University this fall, where she will play softball.

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.

Two-time winner Taber joins 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 High School), and Lauren Bespuda, (2006-07, Amity Regional 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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