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**RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® NEVADA 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 Sam Pochop of Rancho High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Nevada Softball Player of the Year. Pochop is the first Gatorade Nevada Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from 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 Pochop as Nevada's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Pochop 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-11 junior right-handed pitcher led the Rams (31-9) to the Division 1 state finals this past season. Pochop compiled a 19-4 record and a 0.51 ERA, striking out 278 batters in 177.2 innings pitched while issuing just 18 walks. A First Team All-State selection, she was also named the Sunrise Region Most Valuable Pitcher.

Pochop has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Special Olympics and the American Red Cross.

"Pochop's ability to control the game from the mound sets her apart," said Melissa Krueger, head coach at Coronado High. "She's never rattled and she's confident in every pitch she throws. She's able to intimidate batters to the point that they're almost always on the defensive."

Pochop 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.

Pochop joins recent Gatorade Nevada Softball Players of the Year Julia Jensen (2014-15, Reed High School), Heather Bowen (2013-14, Centennial High School), Savannah Horvath (2012-13, Centennial High School), Heather Bowen (2011-12, Centennial High School), Melissa McCormick, (2010-11, Palo Verde High School), Karlyn Jones, (2009-10, Spanish Springs High School), Chelsea Cohen (2008-09, Reed High School), and Mallary Darby (2007-08 & 2006-07, Spanish Springs 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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