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**NORTH KINGSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Kiara Oliver of North Kingstown High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year. Oliver is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from North Kingstown 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 Oliver as Rhode Island's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Oliver 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.).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-5 junior right-handed pitcher had led the Skippers to a 19-0 record and a berth in the Division I state tournament quarterfinals. Oliver owned a 16-0 record with a 0.20 ERA entering the postseason round of eight. She fanned 213 batters in 104 innings pitched, allowing just 26 hits while issuing 39 walks. A two-time First Team All-State honoree, she batted .458 with two home runs, 20 RBI and a .661 slugging percentage through 19 games.

Oliver has maintained a weighted 3.18 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach and as part of multiple community-service initiatives through her church.

"North Kingstown doesn't score a lot of runs but they don't need to with the way Kiara pitches," said Craig Giarrusso, head coach of Tolman High. "She has great movement and can throw any pitch on any count for a strike."

Oliver has made a verbal commitment to play softball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Massachusetts 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.

Oliver joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Players of the Year Rachel Kantor (2014-15, North Kingstown High School), Karissa Carlton (2013-14, North Smithfield High School), Lindsay Mayer (2012-13 & 2011-12, Lincoln High School), Alyssa McCoart (2010-11, Lincoln High School), Elise Fortier (2009-10, Coventry High School), Fallon Scorpio (2008-09, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Steph Morse (2007-08 & 2006-07, Warwick Veterans 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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