

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)

**ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Allison Rutz of Essex High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year. Rutz is the fifth Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Essex 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 Rutz as Vermont's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Rutz 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-6 senior right-handed pitcher had led the Hornets to a 16-0 record and the top seed in the Division 1 state tournament at the time of her selection. Rutz owned a 16-0 record and a 0.65 ERA in the circle entering the postseason, along with a .441 batting average, six home runs and 31 RBI. A three-time First Team All-Metro selection, she has struck out 160 batters in 97 innings pitched while issuing just seven walks.

Rutz has maintained an A average in the classroom. A member of her school's Athletic Leadership Council, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the American Red Cross, Ronald McDonald House Charities and youth softball clinics.

"Rutz has had a great year and a wonderful career," said Jay Hartman, head coach at Missisquoi Valley Union High. "The numbers speak for themselves on the mound and she's one of the most dangerous hitters in the state. If you make a mistake, she'll make you pay."

Rutz will attend Bowdoin College 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.

Rutz joins recent Gatorade Vermont Softball Players of the Year Baylee Ports (2014-15, Mount Anthony Union High School), Kayla Mathieu (2013-14, Bellows Free Academy-Fairfax), Kayla Wood (2012-13, Brattleboro Union High School), Alexis Perry (2011-12 & 2009-10, Essex High School), Chelsea Abbott (2010-11, Bellows Free Academy), Stephanie Frank (2008-09 & 2007-08, Essex High School), and Amanda Downey (2006-07, Essex 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.

###