

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**SUMITON CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kendall Beth Sides of Sumiton Christian High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year. Sides is the first Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sumiton Christian 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 Sides as Alabama's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Sides joins an elite alumni association of past state softball award-winners, including Catherine Osterman (2000-01, Cy Spring High School, Texas), Kelsey Stewart (2009-10, Arkansas City High School, Kan.), Carley Hoover (2012-13 D.W. Daniel High School, S.C.), Jenna Lilley (2012-13, Hoover High School, Ohio), Morgan Zerkle (2012-13 Cabell Midland High School, W. Va.), and Rachel Garcia (2014-15, Highland High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7 senior shortstop and outfielder led the Eagles (57-9) to the Class 1A state championship this past season. Sides compiled a .606 batting average with 13 home runs, 85 RBI, 109 runs scored and 99 stolen bases. The state record-holder for career runs and stolen bases, she is a four-time All-State selection, a three-time Super All-State honoree and was named the Class 2A Player of the Year as a junior. Sides is also a two-time MaxPreps All-American and is ranked as the nation's No. 27 recruit in the Class of 2017 by FloSoftball.

Sides has volunteered locally on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, Operation Shoebox and canned food drives. "There's nothing that Sides can't do offensively," said Wade Tittle, head coach at Carbon Hill High School. "She can hit for power, slap, bunt and she steals bases better than anyone I've ever seen."

Sides has maintained a 3.84 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Alabama 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Sides joins recent Gatorade Alabama Softball Players of the Year Ashlee Swindle (2015-16, Curry High School), Lacey Sumerlin (2014-15, Baker High School), Holly Ward (2013-14, Haleyville High School), Kasey Cooper (2012-13, Dothan High School), Haylie McCleney (2011-12, Mortimer Jordan High School), Shelby Holley (2010-11, Pisgah High School), Leigh Streetman (2009-10, Hueytown High School), Heather Parker (2008-09, Mortimer Jordan High School), Lindsey Dunlap (2007-08, Hueytown High School), and Meghan Harbuck (2006-07, Baker High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kendall Beth will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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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