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**SOUTH ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ALASKA 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 Danni Desjarlais of South Anchorage High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alaska Softball Player of the Year. Desjarlais is the first Gatorade Alaska Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Anchorage 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 Desjarlais as Alaska's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Desjarlais 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-5 senior right-handed pitcher and infielder had led the Wolverines to a 20-0 record and a berth in the state tournament at the time of her selection. Desjarlais posted a 14-0 record with a 1.50 ERA and 112 strikeouts in 70 innings through 20 games. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she also batted .589 with 34 RBI, an .804 slugging percentage and a .610 on-base percentage.

A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and on behalf of the Adopt-A-Family Association. "The excellence Danni Desjarlais she has shown in the circle for this year is second to none," said Jim Huber, head coach at Chugiak High School. "She is also an incredible hitter. She's a fierce competitor and you would be hard pressed to find many players that work as hard as she does."

Desjarlais has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Alaska 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.

Desjarlais joins recent Gatorade Alaska Softball Players of the Year Daisy Page (2015-16, East Anchorage High School), Taria Page (2014-15 & 2013-14, East Anchorage High School), Pauline Tufi (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, West Anchorage High School), Brittany Fenumiai (2009-10 & 2008-09, Juneau-Douglas High School), Carrie Ann Laliberte (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas High School), and Joanna Schultz (2006-07, Chugiak High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Danni 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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