

**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)**

**PINNACLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® ARIZONA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Marissa Schuld of Pinnacle High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year. Schuld is the first Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pinnacle 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 Schuld as Arizona's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Schuld 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-3 junior right-handed pitcher and outfielder posted a 22-1 mark in the circle with a 0.80 earned run average this past season, leading the Pioneers to a 34-2 record and a runner-up finish in the Conference 6A state tournament. Schuld allowed 54 hits and struck out 248 batters in 131 innings pitched, holding opponents to a .120 batting average. At the plate, she hit .505 with 12 doubles, 15 home runs, 57 RBI and a 1.064 slugging percentage.

Schuld has volunteered locally on a fundraising campaign to benefit breast cancer research and as a peer tutor. "Marissa is flat-out good," said Rich Hamilton, head coach of Red Mountain High School. "Offensively she is a tough out and her pitching is excellent. Pinnacle was good, but she made them really good."

Schuld has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of Arizona beginning in the fall of 2018.

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.

Schuld joins recent Gatorade Arizona Softball Players of the Year Hayley Busby (2015-16, Sandra Day O'Connor High School), Arissa Paulson (2014-15, Payson High School), Bre Macha (2013-14, Red Mountain High School), Valerie Kaff (2012-13, Mountain View High School), Kayla Bonstrom (2011-12, Canyon del Oro High School), Mattie Fowler (2010-11, Canyon del Oro High School), Dallas Escobedo (2009-10, St. Mary's Catholic High School), and Kenzie Fowler (2008-09, 2007-08 & 2006-07, Canyon del Oro High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Marissa 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###