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**BENTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ARKANSAS 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 Maddy Prough of Bentonville High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arkansas Softball Player of the Year. Prough is the first Gatorade Arkansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bentonville 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 Prough as Arkansas's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Prough 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-6 senior right-handed pitcher led the Tigers to a 29-1 record and a second straight Class 7A state championship this past season. Prough posted a 22-1 mark in the circle with a 1.06 earned run average. She allowed just 78 hits and struck out 233 batters in 139.1 innings pitched. Prough fired four no-hitters, including two perfect games, and recorded 13 shutouts. A two-time Class 7A state tournament MVP, she is a three-time First Team All-State selection.

Prough has volunteered locally as a camp counselor and youth softball coach. "Maddy has so much power and movement on the ball," said Tamara Strawn, head coach of Sheridan High School. "She has great composure and is a leader. She is a vital part of Bentonville's success."

Prough has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at Crowder College in Missouri beginning 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.

Prough joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Softball Players of the Year Autumn Humes (2015-16 & 2014-15, Bald Knob High School), Andrea Kindrick (2013-14 & 2012-13, Russellville High School), Peyton Jenkins (2011-12, Bryant High School), Kimmy Beasley (2010-11, Foreman High School), Shelby Jo Fenter (2009-10, West Memphis High School), Shelby Wise (2008-09 & 2007-08, Nettleton High School), and Amanda Summerford (2006-07, Fayetteville High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Maddy 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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