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**GEORGETOWN VISITATION PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 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 Sydney Love-Baker of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School as its 2016-17 Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Player of the Year. Love-Baker is the fourth Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Georgetown Visitation Preparatory 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 Love-Baker as District of Columbia's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Love-Baker 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-8 senior third baseman led the Cubs to a 13-6 record this past season. The District's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Love-Baker owned a .550 batting average with 13 home runs, 41 RBI and 33 runs scored. She posted an OPS of 2.132. A First Team Washington Post All-Met selection, she is also a three-time member of the All-Independent School League team and the District of Columbia State Athletic Association All-Star team.

Love-Baker has volunteered locally on behalf of a Vacation Bible School, her church's youth group and a soup kitchen. "Sydney Love-Baker is just a great ball player," said Kristine Vlach, head coach at Maret School. "She's been absolutely phenomenal at third base, and her bat is unbelievable. She's been a big threat ever since her freshman year; she seems to hit a home run every game."

Love-Baker has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Tennessee Tech 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.

Two-time winner Love-Baker joins Gatorade District of Columbia Softball Players of the Year Alee Burke (2014-15, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School), Sarah Ing (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, National Cathedral School), Caroline Sealander (2010-11 & 2009-10, Maret School), Christina Clark (2008-09, Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School), and Alie Kolbe (2007-08 & 2006-07, National Cathedral School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sydney 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).

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