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**OLATHE NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Mady Young of Olathe Northwest High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year. Young is the first Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Olathe Northwest 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 Young as Kansas's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Young 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 senior shortstop led the Ravens to a 24-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Young banded out 49 hits and amassed a .636 batting average with 13 doubles, seven home runs and six triples. She also stole 27 bases, walked 12 times and carried a .685 on-base percentage and a 1.234 slugging percentage. A two-time Sunflower League MVP, she concluded her prep softball career with a state-record 23 triples.

Young has volunteered locally with the Miracle League for special-needs students and as a youth softball coach. "Mady Young would be my first choice in a draft for anything—offense, defense or a game of cards," said Stan Spurlin, head coach of Olathe East High School. "She comes to play hard every day and competes in all situations. Her numbers are impressive, and the better the pitching, the better she hits."

Young has maintained a weighted 4.49 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Northern Colorado 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.

Young joins recent Gatorade Kansas Softball Players of the Year Ryleigh Buck (2015-16, Wellington High School), Brittany Finney (2014-15, Bishop Carroll Catholic High School), Allison Stewart (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Olathe East High School), Shelby Davis (2010-11, Goddard High School), Kelsey Stewart (2009-10, Arkansas City High School), Nikki Armagost (2008-09, Andover Central High School), Paige Ladenburger (2007-08, Washburn Rural High School), and Eranne Daugharthy (2006-07, Olathe East High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Mady 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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