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**PORTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® MAINE 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 Jessica Brown of Portland High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maine Softball Player of the Year. Brown is the first Gatorade Maine Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Portland 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 Brown as Maine's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Brown 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 junior right-handed pitcher had led the Bulldogs to a 14-3 record and a berth in the Class A state tournament at the time of her selection. Brown posted a 9-1 record in the circle with a 1.66 ERA and 101 strikeouts in 72 innings through 17 games. A 2016 All-State Honorable Mention selection, she also batted .465 with 10 RBI, a .628 slugging percentage and a .549 on-base percentage.

An accomplished pianist, Brown is member of the National Honor Society, the Girl Scouts of America and the Math Club. "Jessica Brown is an extremely coachable player," said Portland High head coach Robert Ferrant. "She is the first to arrive at practice and the last one to leave. In the circle, she is clutch in critical situations and relishes the position. She is the one we want up to bat or in the circle when the game is one the line."

Brown has maintained a 102.2 average in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this 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.

Brown joins recent Gatorade Maine Softball Players of the Year Kirsten Pelletier (2015-16, Messalonskee High School), Jen Jones (2014-15, Sanford High School), Alyssa Williamson (2013-14, Scarborough High School), Sonja Morse (2012-13, Cony High School), Julia Geaumont (2011-12, Thornton Academy), Alexis Bogdanovich (2010-11, South Portland High School), Sam Bedore (2009-10, Bangor High School), Hannah Hill (2008-09 & 2007-08, Fryeburg Academy), and Kelsey Griffin (2006-07, Scarborough High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jessica 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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