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**ORANGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH CAROLINA 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 Mia Davidson of Orange High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year. Davidson is the first Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Orange 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 Davidson as North Carolina's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Davidson 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-5 senior catcher had led the Panthers to a 24-3 record and a berth in the Class 3A state championship series at the time of her selection. The state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the year, Davidson owned a .537 batting average with 11 home runs, 48 RBI and 49 runs scored through 27 games. She also broke the state career record for home runs (currently 52) while posting an on-base percentage of .762 and a slugging percentage of 1.333. The two-time Big 8 Conference Player of the Year, Davidson is ranked as the nation's No. 4 recruit in the Class of 2017 by FloSoftball.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Davidson has raised funds to send seriously ill children to summer camp and has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank. "It would be hard for me to imagine that there's a better player than Mia Davidson at this level," said Jennifer Harrison, head coach at Cardinal Gibbons High. "She's a fierce competitor and her skill as a catcher is commendable and impressive."

Davidson has maintained a weighted 4.47 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Mississippi State University 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 Davidson joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Softball Players of the Year Mary Williams (2014-15, Cape Fear High School), Vada Sherrill (2013-14, Alexander Central High School), Lexi Shubert (2012-13, Fred T. Foard High School), Lexi Davis (2011-12, Porter Ridge High School), Chelsea Wilkinson (2010-11 & 2009-10, Alexander Central High School), Tisha Mahon (2008-09, North Davidson High School), Chelsea Leonard (2007-08, Central Davidson High School), and Ashton Ward (2006-07, Butler High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Mia 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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