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**WEST FARGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® NORTH DAKOTA 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 Stephi Dullum of West Fargo High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade North Dakota Softball Player of the Year. Dullum is the fourth Gatorade North Dakota Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Fargo 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 Dullum as North Dakota's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Dullum 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 right-handed pitcher had led the Packers to a 30-3 record at the time of her selection. Dullum owned a 26-2 mark in the circle with a 0.56 earned run average and 258 strikeouts in 149.1 innings pitched through 33 games. She had allowed 53 hits and walked 16. At the plate, Dullum owned a .511 batting average with 10 doubles, four home runs, 44 runs scored, 36 RBI and a .750 slugging percentage. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she is the 2017 Eastern Dakota Conference Player of the Year.

Dullum has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach. "Stephi is the key player behind West Fargo's success," said Jason Lindgren, head coach of Valley City High. "As long as she is pitching, the opponent's score is going to be low and that allows West Fargo the chance to hit. And when they hit they are almost always successful."

Dullum has maintained a 3.14 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at Bemidji State University 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.

Two-time winner Dullum joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Softball Players of the Year Hannah Stewart (2014-15, Bishop Ryan Catholic High School), Brittany Rheault (2013-14, West Fargo High School), Brittany Rheault (2012-13, West Fargo High School), Sydney Greenlund (2011-12, West Fargo High School), and Kacie Johnson (2010-11 & 2009-10, West Fargo High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Stephi 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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