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**MARIST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® OREGON 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 Lauren Burke of Marist Catholic High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Oregon Softball Player of the Year. Burke is the first Gatorade Oregon Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Marist Catholic 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 Burke as Oregon's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Burke 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 returning Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 5-foot-8 senior shortstop had led the Spartans to a 25-3 record at the time of her selection. Burke owned a .629 batting average with 14 doubles, 10 home runs, four triples, 62 runs scored and 42 RBI through 28 games. She also posted a .672 on-base percentage and a 1.124 slugging percentage to go with 30 stolen bases. A three-time Midwestern League Player of the Year, she was named to FloSoftball's Louisville Slugger Hit Club as one of the top 10 hitters in the country.

Burke has volunteered locally with Meals on Wheels and as a youth softball coach. "Lauren is a special athlete who is fun to watch," said Eric Leyba, head coach of Churchill High. "Her skill set is so far ahead of the high school athlete. Her presence at the plate is huge—she's hurt teams with her ability to bunt, slap or hit away with power. Lauren also has next-level speed which you normally don't see at this level."

Burke has maintained a 3.18 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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 Burke joins recent Gatorade Oregon Softball Players of the Year Emily Sorem (2014-15, Tualatin High School), Katie Donovan (2013-14, South Salem High School), Maryssa Becker (2012-13 & 2011-12, North Medford High School), Alyssa Gillespie (2010-11, Glencoe High School), Kaitlin Inglesby (2009-10, Central Catholic High School), Anna Bertrand (2008-09, McMinnville High School), Paige Hall (2007-08, Jesuit High School), and Mikayla Endicott (2006-07, Roseburg High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lauren 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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