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**HEMPFIELD AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® PENNSYLVANIA 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 Morgan Ryan of Hempfield Area High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Player of the Year. Ryan is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hempfield Area 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 Ryan as Pennsylvania's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Ryan 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-10 senior right-handed pitcher had led the Spartans to a 22-0 record and the Class 6A Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League championship game at the time of her selection. Ryan owned a 17-0 record and a 0.87 ERA in the circle along with a .446 average, four home runs and 30 RBI through 22 games. She struck out 159 batters with just 21 walks in 105 innings pitched. Ryan is a First Team All-State honoree and was named Class 4A Player of the Year as a junior.

A peer tutor in her school, Ryan has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. "In my mind, Morgan Ryan is the best athlete in Pennsylvania right now," said Gary Serock, head coach at Albert Gallatin High. "She has been amazing on the mound this year, one of the strongest and winningest pitchers in the game."

Ryan has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Ryan joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Softball Players of the Year Maggie Balint (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Avon Grove High School), Alexis Bower (2012-13, Williamsport High School), Christy Von Pusch (2011-12, Radnor High School), Lauren Walker (2010-11 & 2009-10, Central York High School), Nicole Smith (2008-09, Milton Area High School), Alexa Bryson (2007-08, Greater Latrobe High School), and Trish Melvin (2006-07, Vincentian Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Morgan 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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