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**UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH 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 Bailey Betenbaugh of Union County High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade South Carolina Softball Player of the Year. Betenbaugh is the first Gatorade South Carolina Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Union County 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 Betenbaugh as South Carolina's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Betenbaugh 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-9 sophomore right-handed pitcher and infielder led the Yellow Jackets (26-6) to the Class 4A state championship this past season. Betenbaugh compiled a 16-4 record and a 1.38 ERA in the circle to go with a .504 batting average, nine home runs and 52 RBI at the plate. An All-State and All-Region honoree, she is ranked as the nation's No. 25 recruit in the Class of 2019 by FloSoftball.

A devoted member of her church youth group, Betenbaugh has served as a peer tutor and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs. "She did a fantastic job this year," said James Marlow, head coach at Lugoff-Elgin High School. "She throws hard, she throws strikes and she doesn't walk people. She's also an extremely dangerous hitter who can bang the ball around the entire ballpark."

Betenbaugh has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Betenbaugh joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Softball Players of the Year Cayla Drotar (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Hartsville High School), Carley Hoover (2012-13 & 2011-12, D.W. Daniel High School), Leslie Jury (2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, J.L. Mann Academy), Stephanie Saylor (2007-08, Wren High School), and Casey Faile (2006-07, Andrew Jackson High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Bailey 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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