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**WILLIS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® TEXAS 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 Casey Dixon of Willis High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Texas Softball Player of the Year. Dixon is the first Gatorade Texas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Willis 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 Dixon as Texas's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Dixon 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 senior right-handed pitcher had led the Wildkats to a 39-7 record at the time of her selection. Dixon owned a 34-7 mark in the circle with a 1.07 earned run average and 415 strikeouts in 236 innings pitched thru 46 games. Dixon pitched two complete games on a single day in each of Willis' final three rounds of the Class 5A, Region 3 tournament, leading the Wildkats to 2-1 series victories all three times. At the plate, the three-time District 18-5A MVP owned a .383 batting average with 15 doubles, seven home runs, 36 RBI and a .652 slugging percentage.

Dixon has volunteered locally at an animal shelter and as a youth softball coach. "Casey dominates the circle and moves the ball around well," said Jamie Maurer, head coach of Brenham High. "We were a strong hitting ball club, but Casey found a way to shut us down. Casey is the key to the Wildkats' success. She keeps them in every game."

Dixon has maintained a weighted 4.15 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette 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.

Dixon joins recent Gatorade Texas Softball Players of the Year Maddie MacGrandle (2015-16, Frisco High School), Samantha Show (2014-15 & 2012-13, East Bernard High School), Randi Rupp (2013-14, Barbers Hill High School), Heather Stearns (2011-12, Hebron High School), Paige McDuffee (2010-11, The Woodlands High School), Rachel Fox (2009-10 & 2008-09, Fort Bend Baptist Academy), Whitney Canion (2007-08, Aledo High School), and Brittany Barnhill (2006-07, Northwest High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Casey 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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