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**WOODINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® WASHINGTON SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Taylor Rhinehart of Woodinville High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year. Rhinehart is the second Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Woodinville 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 Rhinehart as Washington's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Rhinehart 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-7 senior right-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Falcons to a 26-0 record and the Class 4A state championship this past season. Rhinehart posted a 14-0 mark in the circle to go with a 0.40 earned run average and two saves. She struck out 157 batters in 87 innings pitched, allowing 35 hits and issuing 13 walks. At the plate, the KingCo MVP batted .417 with eight doubles, 26 RBI and a .643 slugging percentage.

Rhinehart has volunteered locally with the Woodinville High Link Crew and as a youth softball coach. "Taylor is the complete deal," said Tony Batinovich, head coach of Puyallup High School. "Mentally, nothing appeared to phase her. She puts a whole lot of spin and movement on the ball. They would not be the same without her."

Rhinehart has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at Villanova 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.

Rhinehart joins recent Gatorade Washington Softball Players of the Year Maggie Gallagher (2015-16, Kennedy Catholic High School), Quinn Breidenbach (2014-15, Enumclaw High School), Kayla Andrews (2013-14, Richland High School), Ashley Thompson (2012-13, Connell High School), Madi Schreyer (2011-12, Woodinville High School), Alyson Ambler 2010-11, Walla Walla High School), Hope Klicker (2009-10, Walla Walla High School), Amanda Fitzsimmons (2008-09, Auburn Riverside High School), Sam Skillingstad (2007-08, Shadle Park High School), and Sam Skillingstad (2006-07, Shadle Park High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Taylor 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).