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**BRANTLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 4, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Leanna Johnson of Brantley High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year. Johnson is the first Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Brantley 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 Johnson as Alabama's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year, Johnson 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 led the Bulldogs (53-4) to the Class 1A state championship this past season. Johnson compiled a 48-4 record with a 0.45 ERA in the circle, along with a .374 batting average, seven home runs and 43 RBI. She struck out 536 batters in 265.2 innings pitched. The Most Outstanding Player at the state tournament, Johnson has been named Class 1A Pitcher of the Year three times.

A devoted member of her church youth group, Johnson has volunteered locally on behalf of the Brantley Parks and Recreation Department and youth softball camps.

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

Johnson joins recent Gatorade Alabama Softball Players of the Year Kendall Beth Sides (2016-17, Sumiton Christian High School), Ashlee Swindle (2015-16, Curry High School), Lacey Sumerlin (2014-15, Baker High School), Holly Ward (2013-14, Haleyville High School), Kasey Cooper (2012-13, Dothan High School), Haylie McCleney (2011-12, Mortimer Jordan High School), Shelby Holley (2010-11, Pisgah High School), Leigh Streetman (2009-10, Hueytown High School), Heather Parker (2008-09, Mortimer Jordan High School), Lindsey Dunlap (2007-08, Hueytown High School), and Meghan Harbuck (2006-07, Baker High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Leanna 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.