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**PINNACLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® ARIZONA 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 Marissa Schuld of Pinnacle High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year. Schuld is the first Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pinnacle 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 Schuld as Arizona's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Schuld 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-4 senior right-handed pitcher led the Pioneers to a 30-6 record and the Conference 6A state championship this past season. Schuld compiled an 11-1 record in the circle with a 0.74 earned run average and 151 strikeouts against just six walks in 76 innings pitched. At the plate, she produced a .574 batting average with 16 home runs, 12 doubles, nine triples, 48 runs scored and 57 RBI. She recorded a .626 on-base percentage and a 1.252 slugging percentage.

Schuld has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit both breast cancer and ALS research, and she has donated her time as a peer tutor.

Schuld has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Arizona 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.

Two-time winner Schuld joins Gatorade Arizona Softball Players of the Year Hayley Busby (2015-16, Sandra Day O'Connor High School), Arissa Paulson (2014-15, Payson High School), Bre Macha (2013-14, Red Mountain High School), Valerie Kaff (2012-13, Mountain View High School), Kayla Bonstrom (2011-12, Canyon del Oro High School), Mattie Fowler (2010-11, Canyon del Oro High School), Dallas Escobedo (2009-10, St. Mary's Catholic High School), Kenzie Fowler (2008-09, Canyon del Oro High School), Kenzie Fowler (2007-08, Canyon del Oro High School), and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Marissa 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/>.