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**NEW PALESTINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE® INDIANA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 4, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Ashley Prange of New Palestine High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Indiana Softball Player of the Year. Prange is the first Gatorade Indiana Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from New Palestine 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 Prange as Indiana's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Prange 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 shortstop had led the Dragons (26-1) to the regional championship game at the time of her selection. Prange owned a .591 batting average with 16 home runs, 64 RBI and 44 runs scored through 27 games. The state single-season record-holder for home runs, she is a First Team All-State selection, a four-time All-Conference honoree and a Miss Softball finalist.

A member of her school's student leadership program, Prange has served as an elementary school tutor and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Hancock County Hope Center and Best Buddies International.

Prange has maintained a 4.09 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Ohio State 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.

Prange joins recent Gatorade Indiana Softball Players of the Year Alexis Holloway (2016-17, Crown Point High School), Miranda Elish (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Crown Point High School), Erin Rethlake (2012-13, Huntington North High School), Brooke Boetjer (2011-12, South Putnam High School), Kelsi Jones (2010-11, Carmel High School), Morgan Lewis (2009-10, Lutheran High School), Mel Dumezich (2008-09, Whiting High School), Katie Hackney (2007-08, Huntington North High School), and Emily Wethington (2006-07, Scecina Memorial High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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