

**SEAMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® KANSAS 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 Lauren Mills of Seaman High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year. Mills is the first Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Seaman 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 Mills as Kansas' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Mills 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 first baseman and left-handed pitcher compiled a .696 batting average with 15 home runs and 60 runs batted in this past season, leading the Vikings (21-4) to the Class 5A state semifinals. Mills also collected eight doubles, scored 32 runs and walked 39 times to produce a .825 on-base percentage and a 1.642 slugging percentage. In the circle, Mills owned an 8-1 record with a 3.43 earned run average. She concluded her prep softball career with a .731 batting average and 37 home runs.

A two-time state champion power lifter, Mills is a member of her school's Art Club and has had her work shown at the Seaman High Art Gallery and the Topeka Art Guild. She has volunteered locally as a youth softball and volleyball coach.

Mills has maintained a 3.27 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at Wichita 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.

Mills joins recent Gatorade Kansas Softball Players of the Year Mady Young (2016-17, Olathe Northwest High School), Ryleigh Buck (2015-16, Wellington High School), Brittany Finney (2014-15, Bishop Carroll Catholic High School), Allison Stewart (2013-14, 2012-13 & 2011-12, Olathe East High School), Shelby Davis (2010-11, Goddard High School), Kelsey Stewart (2009-10, Arkansas City High School), Nikki Armagost (2008-09, Andover Central High School), Paige Ladenburger (2007-08, Washburn Rural High School), and Eranne Daugharthy (2006-07, Olathe East High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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