

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

**MOSES BROWN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE® RHODE ISLAND 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 Ali Blanchard of Moses Brown School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year. Blanchard is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Moses Brown 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 Blanchard as Rhode Island's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Blanchard 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 right-handed pitcher and first baseman had led the Quakers to a 15-3 record and a berth in the Division I state tournament at the time of her selection. Blanchard posted a 7-1 mark with a 1.03 ERA in the circle, recording 108 strikeouts in 47.2 innings pitched. She fired four no-hitters and allowed surrendered 14 hits through 18 games. At the plate, the 2017 First Team All-State selection produced a .533 batting average entering the postseason with five home runs, 28 runs scored, 23 RBI and a .983 slugging percentage.

Blanchard is a member of the Key Ambassador Group at Moses Brown, providing tours for prospective students and mentoring new students. She created the group Friends of Fastpitch, which collects and donates gently-used softball equipment to those in need, and has also volunteered locally as part of multiple community service projects through her church.

Blanchard has maintained a weighted 3.86 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to attend Princeton University, where she will play softball, 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.

Blanchard joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Players of the Year Kiara Oliver (2016-17 & 2015-16, North Kingstown High School), Rachel Kantor (2014-15, North Kingstown High School), Karissa Carlton (2013-14, North Smithfield High School), Lindsay Mayer (2012-13 & 2011-12, Lincoln High School), Alyssa McCoart (2010-11, Lincoln High School), Elise Fortier (2009-10, Coventry), Fallon Scorpio (2008-09, St. Mary Academy-Bay View), and Steph Morse (2007-08 & 2006-07, Warwick Veterans) among the state's list of former award winners.

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