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**HARTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Cayla Drotar of Hartsville High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Carolina Softball Player of the Year. Drotar is the first Gatorade South Carolina Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hartsville 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 Drotar as South Carolina's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award announced in June, Drotar joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Alicia Hollowell (2000-01, Fairfield HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Angela Tincher (2002-03, James River HS, Va.) and Kenzie Fowler (2006-07, Canyon del Oro HS, Ariz.).

The 5-foot-7 senior right-handed pitcher led the Red Foxes (32-3) to the Class 3A state championship this past season. The state's Gatorade Softball Player of the Year as a sophomore and junior, Drotar compiled a 20-2 record and a 0.42 ERA in the circle to go with a .500 batting average, 10 home runs and 49 RBI. A six-time All-State performer, she struck out 204 batters in 130 innings pitched. A member of the American Family Insurance Preseason ALL-USA Softball Team, Drotar is ranked as the nation's No. 15 recruit in the Class of 2016 by FloSoftball.com.

Drotar has maintained a 3.15 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of youth sports programs and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

"Drotar is a very, very talented kid," said Doug Frye, head coach at Gray Collegiate Academy. "She can hit the ball a long way and she's a beast on the mound. Throws hard with a great change, a good rise ball and she really commands the plate."

Drotar has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Three-time winner Drotar joins Gatorade South Carolina Softball Players of the Year Carley Hoover (2012-13 & 2011-12, D.W. Daniel High School), Leslie Jury (2010-11, 2009-10 & 2008-09, J.L. Mann Academy), Stephanie Saylor (2007-08, Wren High School), and Casey Faile (2006-07, Andrew Jackson High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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