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Kirsten Shortridge Named Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year

KELLER, Texas (June 6, 2006) — Entering its third decade of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade® Thirst Quencher today announced Kirsten Shortridge of Keller High School in Keller, Texas as its 2005-06 Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year. Shortridge joins University of Texas star pitcher and three-time USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Cat Osterman as the only native Texans to win the award.

The award, which recognizes athletic achievement as well as the academic performance and overall character of its recipient, distinguishes Shortridge as the nation's best high school softball player. A national advisory board comprised of sportswriters and sport-specific experts from around the country selected Shortridge from the more than 364,000 softball players nationwide. She is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Female High School Athlete of the Year Award, to be presented at an awards ceremony the afternoon prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

Shortridge went 32-3 in the circle with a 0.23 ERA and 438 strikeouts as a senior, recording 23 shutouts, eight no-hitters and three perfect games – two of which came in consecutive outings. She led Keller to an overall record of 34-3, its fourth consecutive district title and its second consecutive appearance in the Texas 5A state championship game.

The Baylor University signee capped her prep career with unofficial totals of 112 wins and 1,544 strikeouts, the latter of which would place her atop the all-time list in Texas and No. 9 all-time according to the National High School Sports Record Book (*National Federation of State High School Associations*). She is a four-time conference MVP, three-time All-State and NFCA All-American, and was this year's *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* player of the year.

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“Kirsten’s work ethic and competitiveness are above and beyond any 18-year-old I’ve ever worked with,” says Keller head coach Moe Fritz. “Her dedication and drive inspire her teammates, as well as her coaches.”

Shortridge’s standard of excellence extends to the classroom, where she maintains a 3.56 GPA and scored 1650 on the SAT. She is an active member of her church and is a Special Olympics volunteer.

“Without question, Kirsten is deserving of recognition as the nation’s best high school softball player based on her performance and the tremendous ability she’s demonstrated,” said Gatorade Senior Vice President of Sports Marketing Tom Fox. “But she is also a shining example to peers and aspiring young players of what a leader and a student-athlete should be. She represents everything we hope for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient.”

The Gatorade Player of the Year program recognizes one winner in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and awards one National Player of the Year in five boys sports (football, soccer, basketball, baseball, track & field) and five girls sports (volleyball, soccer, basketball, softball, track & field). In addition to athletic performance, award criteria include the achievement in the classroom and overall character. Previous Gatorade National Player of the Year award winners include:

- 2006 Women’s College World Series participants Anjelica Selden and Lisa Dodd (UCLA), Alicia Hollowell (Arizona) and Cat Osterman (Texas)
- WNBA all-time leading scorer and rebounder Lisa Leslie
- Beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Reigning 200-meter world champion Allyson Felix
- Reigning American League Most Valuable Player Alex Rodriguez
- NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith
- Two-time NFL Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- U.S. men’s national soccer team captain Claudio Reyna

For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information and lists of past winners and future announcement dates, visit www.gatorade.com/playeroftheyear.

PAST GATORADE NATIONAL SOFTBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

Year	Name	High School	Status
2005-06	Kirsten Shortridge	Keller/Keller, TX	High School Senior
2004-05	Dani Hofer	Palm Harbor University/Palm Harbor, FL	LSU
2003-04	Anjelica Selden	Vanden/Fairfield, CA	UCLA
2002-03	Lisa Dodd	University City/San Diego, CA	UCLA
2001-02	Alicia Hollowell	Fairfield/Fairfield, CA	Univ. of Arizona
2000-01	Cat Osterman	Cypress Falls/Houston, TX	Univ. of Texas/U.S. National Team
1999-00	Tia Bollinger	Mater Dei/Santa Ana, CA	Univ. of Washington Graduate
1998-99	Maureen LeCocq	Chaminade College Prep/West Hills, CA	Stanford Univ. Graduate
1997-98	Amanda Freed	Pacifica/Garden Grove, CA	Texas Thunder/U.S. National Team