

EAST COWETA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (May 30, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Kelley Lynch of East Coweta High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Georgia Softball Player of the Year**. Lynch is the first Gatorade Georgia Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from East Coweta 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 Lynch as Georgia's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Lynch 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 shortstop led the Indians to a 32-2 record and their second consecutive Class 7A state championship this past season. The state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Lynch compiled a 17-0 record with a 0.27 ERA, along with a .436 batting average, three home runs and 25 RBI. She surrendered just 18 hits and 13 walks in 105.1 innings pitched, while fanning 236 batters. The Georgia Athletic Coaches Association Player of the Year, Lynch was also named Player of the Year by the Georgia Dugout Club and is ranked as the nation's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2019 by Softball America.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Lynch has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program and youth softball teams. "Kelley Lynch is the best high school pitcher I've seen in 15 years of coaching," said Carrie Gilmore, head coach at Newnan High School. "When she was on the mound, they were practically unbeatable. I hated playing against her because I knew it would be so tough to score, but she was truly fun to watch, because that level of talent is so rare."

Lynch has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Washington 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Two-time winner Lynch joins Gatorade Georgia Softball Players of the Year Keara Napoli (2016-17, Cambridge High School), Ashley Morgan (2015-16, Chapel Hill High School), Kelly Barnhill (2014-15, Pope High School) and Meghan Gregg (2013-14, Flint River Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Lynch also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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