

**DESTINY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ayla Tuua of Destiny Christian Academy is the 2025-26 Gatorade California Softball Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Tuua as California’s best high school softball player and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress, TX), Alicia Hollowell (2001-02, Fairfield, CA) and Hannah Wells (2024-25, Coahoma, TX).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-10 senior right-handed pitcher, first baseman and outfielder had led the Lions to a 28-0 record and a berth in the Northern California Regional Division I Tournament quarterfinals. The state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, Tuua compiled a 10-0 mark in the circle with a 0.34 ERA through 28 games, striking out 120 batters while allowing just 17 hits in 62 innings. Ranked as the nation’s No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2026 by MaxPreps and a three-time Sacramento Bee Player of the Year, she owned a .667 batting average with 17 home runs, 57 runs scored, 71 RBI and a 1.513 slugging percentage entering the quarterfinals.

A member of the California Scholarship Federation, Tuua is the president of the Destiny Christian Polynesian Club. She has volunteered locally crocheting and donating beanies to hospitals for newborn babies. She has also donated her time as a peer tutor and youth softball coach. “Ayla Tuua is an exceptional softball player and an even better person,” said Taylor Ernst, head coach of Sutter High School. “She leads by example through her work ethic, composure and respect for the game.”

Tuua has maintained a weighted 4.16 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at Louisiana State University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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