

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

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Caroline Stanton of Buford High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia 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 Stanton as Georgia’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).

The 6-foot-0 senior right-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Wolves to a 36-0 record and the Class 6A state title. Stanton compiled a 14-0 record on the circle in a platoon role with classmate Addie Rackley and posted a 0.35 ERA in 81 innings. She hurled 11 shutouts, including three no-hitters, fanned 1.9 batters per inning and finished with WHIP of 0.49 as opposing batters hit .097 against her. Stanton also batted .329 with 8 home runs and 38 RBI, producing a .740 slugging percentage and an OPS of 1.157. Ranked as the nation’s No. 1 prospect in her class by both Prep Softball and Softball America, she led USA Softball’s Women’s Junior National Team to the gold medal at the 2025 World Baseball Softball Confederation U-18 World Cup, earning Tournament Defensive MVP honors.

A member of the Beta Club, a weekly Bible studies group and a leader in her school’s chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Stanton has participated in the IDEALS Leadership School, a nomination-based program for student-athletes who’ve demonstrated leadership potential. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Feed the Hungry Foundation and has also donated her time as a youth softball instructor at camps and clinics as well as the Happy Feet at Night to Shine event and the Buford United Softball Game, which pairs youth athletes with intellectually challenged peers in celebration of sport. “Caroline Stanton’s resume is exceptional from every angle,” said Prep Softball National Analyst Kayla Lombardo. “She was utterly dominant in the circle from the high school level all the way through the international ranks. When you combine her elite performance, championship impact and success against the highest levels of competition, she’s a stellar choice.”

Stanton has maintained a 4.13 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at the University of Florida 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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