

## **SOUTH WARREN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KENTUCKY SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced McLaine Hudson of South Warren High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Kentucky 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 Hudson as Kentucky'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-4 senior shortstop had led the Spartans (41-0) to the 4th Region championship and a berth in this spring's state tournament. Entering the first round, Hudson owned a .752 batting average with 78 RBI, 104 runs and a state single-season record 26 home runs. The returning Gatorade Kentucky Player of the Year, she also compiled a .795 on-base percentage through 41 games, stealing 49 bases and drawing 31 walks while striking out just three times in 161 plate appearances.

A member of the Southern Kentucky Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Hudson has volunteered locally as a team leader at the FCA Power Camp for children. She has also donated her time to the Down Syndrome of Southern Kentucky Buddy House, helping with the organization's Hardwood Heroes basketball games. "McLaine Hudson is the best player I've seen in the six years I've coached at Orange Beach," said Shane Alexander. "We tried everything when we pitched to her and had no success. You will hear her name a lot for the next four years in college."

Hudson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at Florida 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](http://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](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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