

TAUNTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Bella Bourque of Taunton High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Massachusetts 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 Bourque as Massachusetts’ 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-8 junior shortstop had led the Tigers to a 20-1 record and a berth in the third round of the Division I state tournament this past season. Bourque batted .589 with 34 RBIs and 22 extra-base hits through 21 games. She also scored 42 runs, stole 12 bases and compiled an OPS of 1.686. Ranked as the nation’s No. 50 prospect in her class by Prep Softball, she’s a two-time Boston Globe All-Scholastic selection and a three-time state champion.

Bourque has volunteered locally as an instructor with the Taunton Girls Softball League. “She leads by example, works hard and has had a great work ethic all year,” said Michell Raposo, head coach of Taunton High School. “She’s done a really good job this year working on her hitting and emphasizing hard, line-drive contact. Bella has been clutch and consistent throughout her career for us, but particularly this year.”

Bourque has maintained a 4.61 GPA in the classroom. She has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina beginning in the fall of 2027.

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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