

**RAYMORE-PECULIAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kelsie Donaldson of Raymore-Peculiar High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Missouri 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 Donaldson as Missouri’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 5-foot-9 senior left-handed pitcher led the Panthers (25-2) to the Class 5 state championship this past season. Donaldson compiled a record of 16-1 in the circle with a 1.30 ERA and 205 strikeouts in 129 innings, an average of 1.6 Ks per frame. Ranked as the nation’s No. 25 prospect in her class by Perfect Game, she also batted .490 with 39 RBI and nine home runs, posting a .566 on-base percentage.

Donaldson has volunteered locally as a Special Education Peer Model Intern at her school and on behalf of its Teacher/Support Staff of the Year Banquet. She has also donated her time on behalf of the Special Olympics, including organizing a prom. “Donaldson was the best player in the state this year,” said Josh Keeney, Lee’s Summit North High School head coach. “Not only is she able to shut you down on the mound, but also I think there’s a good argument that she was the best hitter in the state.”

Donaldson has maintained a 3.94 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at North Carolina 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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