

**PALO VERDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Taylor Johns of Palo Verde High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Nevada 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 Johns as Nevada’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-6 senior middle infielder led the Panthers to a 24-1 record and a second-straight Class 5A state championship this past season. The state’s returning Gatorade Player of the Year, Johns compiled a .662 batting average with 21 home runs and 43 RBI. She also banged out 10 doubles, scored 45 runs and stole 13 bases on her way to a .740 on-base percentage and a 1.703 slugging percentage. Ranked as the nation’s No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2026 by MaxPreps, she concluded her prep softball career with 52 home runs.

A member of the Palo Verde High School student council, Johns has volunteered locally as a youth softball coach and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. “Taylor Johns’ offensive power and consistency are incredible,” said Laura Cardin, head coach of Liberty High School. “She’s been an offensive powerhouse for four years and really made a statement her senior season.”

Johns has maintained a weighted 4.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at the University of Georgia 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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