

**WEST FORSYTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Morgan Maxwell of West Forsyth High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade North Carolina 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 Maxwell as North Carolina’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 junior left-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Titans (25-4) to the Class 8A state semifinals this past season. Maxwell compiled a 17-6 record in the circle with a 0.48 ERA in 147.1 innings. She fanned 237 batters and produced a 0.61 WHIP, firing 11 shutouts including four no-hitters, one of which was a perfect game. A four-time All-State selection, she batted .512 with 10 doubles, three triples, 13 home runs and 48 RBI. Maxwell compiled an OBP of .577 and a slugging percentage of 1.075 to finish with an OPS of 1.652. Ranked as the nation’s No. 3 prospect in her class by both Prep Softball and Perfect Game, she was named to the 2026 USA Softball U-18 Women’s Pan-American Championship roster.

Maxwell has volunteered locally on behalf of a food pantry, the New Castle County Hope Center for the homeless and the Food Bank of Delaware. She also serves as a counselor and mentor for Minority Prospects Softball, which stages an annual game showcasing the nation’s best Historically Black Colleges and Universities’ softball talent. In addition, she’s donated her time to Wreaths Across America and as a youth softball mentor. “As a player, Morgan has been our No. 1 starter since her freshman year,” said West Forsyth High School head coach Kevin Baity. “When she arrived here, it was obvious she was mature beyond her age. Opposing coaches have noted their appreciation for her respect for their teams and the game itself. Although she’s a fierce competitor, she always shows good sportsmanship, win or lose. She’s an all-around class act.”

Maxwell has maintained a 4.1 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of Georgia 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 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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