

**BOX ELDER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Kennadie 'KJ' Blackmer of Box Elder High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Utah 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 Blackmer as Utah’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 right-handed pitcher and infielder batted .554 with 26 home runs and 68 RBI this past season, leading the Bees (29-6) to the Class 5A state championship series. Blackmer also produced 11 doubles, 28 walks and scored 40 runs to compile a .669 on-base percentage and a 1.522 slugging percentage. In the circle, she went 14-3 with a 1.35 ERA, striking out 220 batters while allowing just 62 hits in 108.2 innings. An All-State selection as a freshman and sophomore, she concluded her junior year with 49 home runs in her prep softball career.

A member of the Box Elder High School choir, Blackmer has volunteered locally making care kits and blankets for patients at Primary Children’s Hospital in Salt Lake City in addition to serving as a youth softball and soccer coach. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. “KJ’s demeanor in the circle and at the plate is calm, confident and impressive,” said Kamie Hoggan, head coach of Clearfield High School. “She’s one the state’s best, talent-wise, for sure.”

Blackmer has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play softball at Utah Valley University 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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