

CABELL MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Drea Watts of Cabell Midland High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade West Virginia 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 Watts as West Virginia'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).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-6 senior right-handed pitcher had led the Knights (25-4) to the No. 1 seed in the AAAA state tournament. Watts compiled a record of 19-2 in the circle with a 0.66 ERA through 29 games, fanning and 307 batters in 137.2 innings. The Mountain State Athletic Conference Pitcher of the Year, she averaged 2.2 Ks per inning and threw eight no-hitters.

Watts has volunteered locally in the nursery at her church, in addition to teaching kids lessons, handicrafts and songs with her youth group. She has also donated her time assembling Christmas and other holiday baskets to give to the elderly and families in need. "Drea is a great competitor and leader for her team," said Meghan Stevens, head coach at Hurricane High School. "You know when she steps in the circle she's prepared and will always compete until the end. She mixes her pitches well and is tough to hit. She also does it all with class and sportsmanship."

Watts has maintained a 4.43 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play softball at Bowling Green 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.

###