

**SUSSEX HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 5, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Bitsy Palicka of Sussex Hamilton High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Wisconsin 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 Palicka as Wisconsin’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-7 sophomore right-handed pitcher had led the Chargers (25-1) to the Division 1 sectional semifinals. Palicka compiled a 22-1 record in the circle with a 0.57 ERA through 26 games, fanning 247 batters in 122 innings, an average of two strikeouts per frame. The Greater Metro Conference Pitcher of the Year, she entered the sectional final four with a .506 batting average, 39 RBI, six home runs and 31 runs scored.

Palicka has volunteered locally with Create for Kids, a club that makes cards for hospitalized children throughout the year. She has also donated her time by sorting food at the Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin food pantry in addition to assisting at youth basketball and softball camps during the summertime. “She carries herself with a calm, stoic presence on the mound that you simply can’t teach,” said Kaylee Gendrich, Hamilton High School head coach. “In big moments, she doesn’t flinch. She competes with a quiet confidence, always focused on doing whatever her team needs and she consistently puts the success of the group ahead of any individual recognition.”

Palicka has maintained a 4.17 weighted GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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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