

**LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Giana LaCedra of Lowell High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year. LaCedra is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lowell High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes LaCedra as Massachusetts' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, LaCedra joins an elite alumni association of past state softball award-winners, including Catherine Osterman (2000-01, Cy Spring High School, Texas), Kelsey Stewart (2009-10, Arkansas City High School, Kan.), Carley Hoover (2012-13 D.W. Daniel High School, S.C.), Jenna Lilley (2012-13, Hoover High School, Ohio), Morgan Zerkle (2012-13 Cabell Midland High School, W. Va.), and Rachel Garcia (2014-15, Highland High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-7 freshman right-handed pitcher had led the Red Raiders to an 18-0 record at the time of her selection. LaCedra owned a 17-0 record with a 0.99 ERA and 180 strikeouts against just nine walks in 113 innings pitched. She spun nine shutouts through 18 games, including a perfect game, and set a school single-game record with 19 strikeouts in her second start. At the plate, LaCedra batted .378 with 11 RBI and a .467 slugging percentage.

LaCedra has volunteered locally as a mentor for students with learning disabilities and she has donated her time as a youth softball coach. "Giana has been pretty dominant in a tough conference," said John Delaney, head coach of Lawrence High. "She has very good poise, especially for a freshman, and good command of her pitches. She has a swagger about her that a veteran pitcher has."

LaCedra has maintained a weighted 4.49 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

LaCedra joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Players of the Year Kelly Nelson (2017-18 & 2016-17, Norton High School), Maddy Barone (2015-16, Silver Lake Regional High School), Erin Gallo (2014-15, St. Peter-Marian High School) and Megan Colleran (2013-14, North Attleborough High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," LaCedra also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).