

BLAIR OAKS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSOURI SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (May 30, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Makenna Kliethermes of Blair Oaks High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year**. Kliethermes is the first Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Blair Oaks 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 Kliethermes as Missouri's best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Kliethermes 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-11 senior and right-handed pitcher led the Falcons to a 27-5 record and a third-place finish in the Class 2 state tournament this past season. Kliethermes compiled a 21-2 record with a 0.57 ERA, and batted .518 with three home runs and 28 RBI. She surrendered just 47 hits and 31 walks in 134.1 innings pitched, while striking out 300 batters (2.23 per inning). A two-time First Team All-State selection, Kliethermes is ranked as the nation's No. 28 recruit in the Class of 2019 by Softball America.

Kliethermes has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, food-donation drives and youth sports programs. "Kliethermes is very hard to solve," said David Flaspohler, head coach at Osage High. "She can really fire the ball, but her off-speed stuff and her rise ball are good too. She also hits the ball and she has a real presence on the field."

Kliethermes has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

Kliethermes joins recent Gatorade Missouri Softball Players of the Year Gabi Deters (2017-18, Bowling Green High School), Madison Preston (2016-17, Centralia High School), Olivia Kinsey (2015-16, Park Hill South High School), Brittany Nimmo (2014-15, Ozark High School) and Paige Parker (2013-14, Truman High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kliethermes 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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