

## GREAT FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Anna Toon of Great Falls High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Montana Softball Player of the Year**. Toon is the second Gatorade Montana Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Great Falls 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 Toon as Montana'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, Toon 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-10 junior, right-handed pitcher and shortstop led the Bison to a 24-2 record and a second-straight Class AA state championship this past season. Toon posted a 15-2 record with a 1.75 ERA and 114 strikeouts against just 12 walks in 100 innings pitched. She fired three postseason shutouts, including two on the final day of the double-elimination tournament as Great Falls won three straight games to claim the title. At the plate, she batted .500 with eight home runs, 44 runs scored, 38 RBI and a .963 slugging percentage.

Toon helped organize and run a youth sports camp last summer in Great Falls. She has volunteered locally with a recycling company and as a youth softball and baseball coach. "Anna throws hard and keeps hitters on her toes with her change-up," said Lindsey Gustafson, head coach of C.M. Russell High. "She's aggressive and has a lot of power. She was consistent and productive for them all year."

Toon has maintained a 3.63 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Toon joins recent Gatorade Montana Softball Players of the Year Erin Hocker (2017-18, Great Falls High School), Tristin Achenbach (2016-17, C.M. Russell High School), Tristin Achenbach (2015-16, Conrad-Choteau Co-op Team), and Morgan Ray (2014-15 & 2013-14, Frenchtown High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Toon 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).

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