

## LINCOLN SOUTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 **Emma Kauf of Lincoln Southwest High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year**. Kauf is the third Gatorade Nebraska Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln Southwest 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 Kauf as Nebraska'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, Kauf 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-8 senior and catcher led the Silver Hawks (39-5) to the Class A state championship this past season. Named honorary captain of the Lincoln Journal Star Super-State team and also a two-time First Team Omaha World-Herald All-Nebraska selection, Kauf batted .570 with 22 home runs, 60 RBI and a state single-season record 81 runs scored. She also set state career records for home runs (59), RBI (214) and runs (236).

Kauf has volunteered locally on behalf of People's City Mission, the Nebraska Humane Society, blood-donation drives and youth sports camps. "I think Emma Kauf was the best all-around offensive player in the state," said Bryan Shepherd, head coach at Kearney High. "She was also huge defensively, shutting down the running game and blocking everything in the dirt. It would have been hard (for them) to win a state championship without her."

Kauf has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Georgia Tech 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.

Kauf joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Softball Players of the Year Courtney Wallace (2017-18, Papillion-La Vista High School), Rylie Unzicker (2016-17, Millard South High School), Samantha Dellinger (2015-16, Papillion-La Vista High School), Erin Lockhart (2014-15, Lincoln Southeast High School) and Kaylan Jablonski (2013-14, Skutt Catholic High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kauf 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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