

DONOVAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 **Karina Gaskins of Donovan Catholic High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year**. Gaskins is the first Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Donovan Catholic 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 Gaskins as New Jersey'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, Gaskins 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 junior and first baseman had led the Griffins to a 24-1 record at the time of her selection. Gaskins batted .682 with 17 home runs, 48 RBI and 46 runs scored through 25 games. She owned an on-base percentage of .720 and a slugging percentage of 1.637. A National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American, Gaskins was also a First Team All-State selection and the NJ.Com Player of the Year.

Gaskins has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Smile and youth softball programs. "Karina Gaskins is scary—just a big-time hitter," said Rob Stern, head coach at Mount. St. Dominic Academy. "Every time she swings the bat, you hold your breath. She can hit the ball out of the park no matter where you pitch her."

Gaskins has maintained an A average 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.

Gaskins joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Softball Players of the Year Victoria Sebastian (2017-18, Ramsey High School), Julie Rodriguez (2016-17, Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan), Kelsey Oh (2015-16 & 2014-15, Mount Saint Dominic Academy), and Steph Thomas (2013-14, Immaculate Heart Academy) among the state's list of former award winners.

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