

MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OHIO 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 **Hope Straight of Mount Vernon High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Ohio Softball Player of the Year**. Straight is the second Gatorade Ohio Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mount Vernon 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 Straight as Ohio'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, Straight 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-4 senior first baseman and left-handed pitcher batted .494 with 14 home runs and 30 RBI this past season, leading the Yellow Jackets (23-1) to the Division I, Columbus Regional championship game. Straight scored 51 runs and drew 18 walks while posting a .590 on-base percentage, slugging at a rate of 1.169. In the circle, Straight posted a 12-1 record with a 1.64 ERA and 122 strikeouts in 76.2 innings pitched. She graduates with state career records in home runs (60), runs scored (191) and RBI (149).

Straight has volunteered locally at a nursing home and rehabilitation center. She has also donated her time as a youth softball coach. "Hope has zero weaknesses at the plate," said Tim Niswander, head coach of Madison High. "In my nearly 20 years as a high school and travel ball coach, she's the best hitter I've ever seen and it's not even close."

Straight, who has already earned an associate's degree through the Central Ohio Technical College, has maintained a 3.60 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the Ohio State University beginning 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.

Straight joins recent Gatorade Ohio Softball Players of the Year Megan Turner (2017-18, Champion High School), Carly Wagers (2016-17, Williamsburg High School), Madi Huck (2015-16, Hayes High School), Tara Trainer (2014-15, Lebanon High School) and Taran Alvelo (2013-14, Bloom-Carroll High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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