

JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 **Iyanla De Jesus of Jackson High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year**. De Jesus is the first Gatorade Washington Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jackson 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 De Jesus as Washington'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, De Jesus 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 senior right-handed pitcher led the Timberwolves to a 26-2 record and the Class 4A state championship. Sustained rainfall forced the state tournament to be completed in one day, and De Jesus won all four games for Jackson, throwing more than 400 pitches over the course of 25.2 innings. The 2018 Class 4A State Player of the Year, she compiled a 21-2 record in the circle this spring with a 1.04 ERA and 303 strikeouts in 141.2 innings pitched. At the plate, she batted .582 with 11 home runs, 41 RBI, 43 walks, a .745 on-base percentage and a 1.284 slugging percentage for an OPS of 2.029.

De Jesus has volunteered locally as a peer math tutor and as a youth softball coach. "Iyanla is a spark for her team, both on the mound and at the plate," said Ashley Tuiasosopo, head coach of Monroe High. "Her presence is commanding and dominating. She has good command of her pitches and often puts hitters in defensive mode."

De Jesus has maintained a 3.57 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina 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.

De Jesus joins recent Gatorade Washington Softball Players of the Year Brooke Nelson (2017-18, Bonney Lake High School), Taylor Rhinehart (2016-17, Woodinville High School), Maggie Gallagher (2015-16, Kennedy Catholic High School), Quinn Breidenbach (2014-15, Enumclaw High School) and Kayla Andrews (2013-14, Richland High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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