

**BENTONVILLE WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 28, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Hallie Wacaser of Bentonville West High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Arkansas Softball Player of the Year. Wacaser is the second Gatorade Arkansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bentonville West 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 Wacaser as Arkansas'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, Wacaser joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, 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 2017-18 Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-4 senior shortstop was named the best player in the state by MaxPreps.com during the 2020 preseason. A member of the USA Softball 17-and-under Women's National Team, Wacaser won a gold medal with Team USA at the Pan Am Games this past October. A three-time First Team All-State selection, Wacaser is ranked as the nation's No. 18 recruit in the Class of 2020 by FloSoftball.com. She concluded her prep softball career with a .496 batting average, 141 hits, 137 runs scored, 129 runs batted in and 36 home runs.

Wacaser has volunteered locally on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit a scholarship fund for students with single parents, and she has donated her time with Sharing and Caring of Benton County, which benefits local families in need. "From the day I met Hallie Wacaser, I knew she was different," said Anthony Cantrell, head coach of Bentonville West High. "While throwing [batting practice] at tryouts, I hit her with the first pitch and she then hit the next five balls out of the park. She has been a true joy to coach."

Wacaser has volunteered locally on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit a scholarship fund for students with single parents, and she has donated her time with Sharing and Caring of Benton County, which benefits local families in need. "From the day I met Hallie Wacaser, I knew she was different," said Anthony Cantrell, head coach of Bentonville West High. "While throwing [batting practice] at tryouts, I hit her with the first pitch and she then hit the next five balls out of the park. She has been a true joy to coach."

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 and 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.

Two-time winner Wacaser joins Gatorade Arkansas Softball Players of the Year Joley Mitchell (2018-19, Rose Bud High School), Maddy Prough (2016-17, Bentonville High School), and Autumn Humes (2015-16 & 2014-15, Bald Knob High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

###

