

**APPOQUINIMINK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Tayler Vitola of Appoquinimink High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Delaware Softball Player of the Year. Vitola is the first Gatorade Delaware Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Appoquinimink 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 Vitola as Delaware'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, Vitola 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 5-foot-8 senior shortstop helped the PA Chaos Gold team to the Triple Crown/USA 18U national championship last summer, leading the team in batting average and stolen bases. The state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Vitola finished her high school career with a .609 average, .651 on-base percentage and 53 stolen bases. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she batted .603 with 11 RBI, 31 runs scored and 24 stolen bases for the Jaguars (17-2) in 2019.

A chemistry tutor in her school, Vitola has served as a mentor for children with physical disabilities and has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank as well as highway clean-up initiatives and youth sports programs. "Tayler is one of the most talented players I've ever been around," said Appoquinimink coach Brian Timpson. "She's a force at the plate and her speed is unmatched by anyone in the state. She's also a great fielder who takes hits away from our opponents."

Vitola has maintained a weighted 4.40 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington.

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 Vitola joins Gatorade Delaware Softball Players of the Year Nicole Marcon (2017-18, Caravel Academy), Avery Wheatley (2016-17, Delmar High School), Whitney DeMora (2015-16, Polytech High School), and Regan Green (2014-15, Laurel 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.

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