

**RIDGEVUE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO 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 Gracie Walters of Ridgevue High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Idaho Softball Player of the Year. Walters is the first Gatorade Idaho Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ridgevue 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 Walters as Idaho'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, Walters 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-6 senior and right-handed pitcher posted a 2-0 record with a 0.00 ERA this spring, striking out 25 batters and walking just one in 11 innings pitched before the remainder of the season was cancelled. The Southern Idaho Conference Class 4A Player of the Year, Walters concluded her prep career with a 48-15 record, a 0.73 ERA and 784 strikeouts. A three-time First Team All-SIC honoree, she recorded an 11-6 record in 2019 with a 0.73 ERA, striking out 205 batters and issuing just 24 walks in 115.2 innings pitched. Walters also batted .341 with 25 RBI.

Walters has volunteered locally on behalf of community clean-up initiatives and Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which builds and delivers beds to needy children. "Gracie Walters is just an outstanding pitcher, probably the best in the state at any classification," said Kevin Schimmelpfennig, head coach at Vallivue High. "Every year she just gets better; she gives any team she's on a shot at winning the state title."

Walters has maintained a 3.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the College of Southern Idaho.

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.

Walters joins Gatorade Idaho Softball Players of the Year Kaylan Walker (2018-19, Rocky Mountain High School), Lainey Lyle (2017-18, Middleton High School), Lexi Knauss (2016-17, Meridian High School), and Bradie Fillmore (2015-16 & 2014-15, Eagle 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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