

**ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 28, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Bailey Dowling of St. Joseph-Ogden High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year. Dowling is the first Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Joseph-Ogden 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 Dowling as Illinois'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, Dowling 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 state's two-time Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior and shortstop was one of only two high-school athletes on the 2019 USA Softball Junior Women's National Team that won the U19 World Championships last August. Dowling hit six home runs and posted a .649 slugging percentage for Team USA. A three-time First Team All-State selection, she concluded her prep softball career with a state-record 65 home runs along with 209 hits, 202 runs scored, 183 runs batted in and a 1.457 slugging percentage.

Dowling has volunteered locally as a youth mentor and softball coach. "Bailey still works harder than anyone," said Larry Sparks, head coach of St. Joseph-Ogden High. "She is the best player on the field, but she aspires to make everyone around her better. She commands the utmost respect from every team she plays against."

Dowling has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Alabama.

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.

joins Gatorade Idaho Softball Players of the Year

Three-time winner Dowling joins Chardonay Harris (2016-17, Oak Park & River Forest High School), Caroline Hedcock (2015-16, Downers Grove South High School), and Taylor Johnson (2014-15, Beecher 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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