

**COLLINS-MAXWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA 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 Mikayla Houge of Collins-Maxwell High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year. Houge is the first Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Collins-Maxwell 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 Houge as Iowa'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, Houge 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 led the Spartans (28-1) to the Class 1A state championship this past season, posting a 27-1 record with a 0.40 ERA. Houge walked just 26 batters while striking out 302 in 158 innings pitched. A First Team All-State selection and the Ames Tribune Player of the Year, she also batted .522 with five home runs and 44 RBI. Houge was named a First Team All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association.

A devoted member of her church youth group and a talented musician, Houge has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals from the Heartland, Ronald McDonald House Charities, a Vacation Bible School and youth sports programs. "We've played against some quality pitchers over the years, but no one compares to Mikayla Houge," said Courtney Darrow, head coach at Newell-Fonda High. "Her ball movement and placement of pitches is phenomenal. Her hitting is top notch as well. She's a tough out every single time."

Houge has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Virginia. Iowa—distinct from the other 48 states sanctioning softball—begins its high school season in conjunction with Memorial Day, which results in the annual Gatorade honor being based upon candidates' previous scholastic season and offseason club/showcase performance, if applicable.

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.

Houge joins Gatorade Iowa Softball Players of the Year Kaylin Kinney (2018-19, Kennedy High School), Alexia Lara (2017-18, Pleasant Valley High School), Megan Weber (2016-17, Kennedy High School), Alyssa Wiebel (2015-16, Benton Community High School), and DoniRae Mayhew (2014-15, Bettendorf 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).