

**LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Giana LaCedra of Lowell High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year. LaCedra is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lowell 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 LaCedra as Massachusetts'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, LaCedra 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 returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7 sophomore and right-handed pitcher was named the best player in the state by MaxPreps.com during the 2020 preseason. The 2019 Boston Globe Division 1 Player of the Year, LaCedra posted a 20-2 record in the circle as a sophomore with a 0.95 earned run average and 217 strikeouts in 147 innings pitched. She was the top pitcher throughout last summer and fall for the Rhode Island Thunder 18-and-under ASA softball team, competing against elite national competition despite being the youngest member of the pitching staff.

LaCedra has volunteered locally as a mentor for students with learning disabilities and she has donated her time as a youth softball coach. "I know this is such a cliché, but she really is a kid where the bigger the moment, the better she is," said Dave Lotti, LaCedra's summer ball coach with the Rhode Island Thunder. "She really does have a burning desire to be the best."

LaCedra has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school this fall.

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 LaCedra joins Gatorade Massachusetts Softball Players of the Year Kelly Nelson (2017-18 & 2016-17, Norton High School), Maddy Barone (2015-16, Silver Lake Regional High School), and Erin Gallo (2014-15, St. Peter-Marian 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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