

**DONOVAN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Karina Gaskins of Donovan Catholic High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year. Gaskins is the first Gatorade New Jersey Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Donovan Catholic 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 Gaskins as New Jersey'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, Gaskins 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-7 senior first baseman was named a First Team All-American by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association and ranks as the nation's No. 18 prospect in the Class of 2020 by Extra Inning Softball. Also the state's returning Gatorade Softball Player of the Year, Gaskins batted .435 with 19 home runs last summer and fall with the Jersey Intensity, which placed 17th at the PGF Premier 18U Nationals. She led the Griffins (30-2) to the Tournament of Champions title in the 2019 high school season, batting .643 with 19 home runs, 61 RBI and a 2.195 OPS.

A peer tutor in her school, Gaskins has volunteered locally on behalf of Operation Smile, Students Against Destructive Decisions and Seeds of Service. "Karina is just a game-changing kind of player," said Donovan Catholic High School coach Deborah Schwartz. "She's extraordinarily powerful and she's come through over and over again with enormous hits for us."

Gaskins has maintained an A average in the classroom. has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball at the University of Notre Dame.

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 Gaskins joins Gatorade New Jersey Softball Players of the Year Victoria Sebastian (2017-18, Ramsey High School), Julie Rodriguez (2016-17, Northern Valley Regional High School at Old Tappan), and Kelsey Oh (2015-16 & 2014-15, Mount Saint Dominic Academy), 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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