

**EASTERN ALAMANCE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Kenna Raye Dark of Eastern Alamance High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year. Dark is the first Gatorade North Carolina Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Eastern Alamance 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 Dark as North Carolina'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, Dark 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 sophomore right-handed pitcher posted a 5-1 record with a 2.03 ERA this spring, striking out 43 while walking just four batters in 31 innings before the remainder of the season was cancelled. Dark also batted .524 with two home runs and eight RBI. The Class 3A West Pitcher of the Year as a freshman, she ranks as the nation's No. 24 prospect in the Class of 2022 by Softball America. Dark led the Eagles (25-3) to the Class 3A state title in 2019, recording a 19-2 record with a 0.92 ERA and 289 strikeouts, while hitting .435 at the plate with 10 home runs and 30 RBI.

Dark has volunteered locally on behalf of her church's youth ministry and children's softball programs. "We knew right out of the gate that Kenna was going to be special," said Eastern Alamance High School coach Danny Way. "Her pitching is all kinds of good and she never gets rattled, even though we've put her in some really tough situations. She's also probably the best hitter I've ever had (at Eastern Alamance)."

Dark has maintained a 3.82 GPA 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.

Dark joins Gatorade North Carolina Softball Players of the Year Jordan Hatch (2018-19, West Stanly High School), Abby Settlemyre (2017-18, Fred T. Foard High School), Mia Davidson (2016-17 & 2015-16 Orange High School), and Mary Williams (2014-15, Cape Fear 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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