

**COPPER HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Makaiya Gomez of Copper Hills High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Utah Softball Player of the Year. Gomez is the first Gatorade Utah Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Copper Hills 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 Gomez as Utah'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, Gomez 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-9 senior outfielder was a three-time First Team All-State selection for the Grizzlies. Through a 5-2 start this spring, Gomez posted a .632 batting average with 10 runs scored, 11 RBI and two home runs before the season was cancelled. That followed a junior year in which she batted .704 with a 1.254 slugging percentage—she struck out just once in 2019 and concluded her prep softball career with a .574 batting average, 136 hits, 119 RBI and 115 runs scored.

Gomez has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and she has donated her time as a youth softball coach and umpire. "Makaiya is a once-in-a-lifetime player for any high school coach," said John Flores, head coach of Copper Hills High School. "She is one of the most inspiring, humble, confident and unselfish kids I have ever coached."

Gomez has maintained a 3.74 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Utah.

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.

Gomez joins Gatorade Utah Softball Players of the Year Huntyr Ava (2018-19, West High School), Jordyn Bate (2017-18, Spanish Fork High School), Cambrie Hazel (2016-17, Spanish Fork High School), Taylei Williams (2015-16, Juab High School), and Kaycie Jensen (2014-15, Springville 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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