

**BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Meghan Connor of Bellows Free Academy as its 2019-20 Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year. Connor is the sixth Gatorade Vermont Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellows Free Academy.

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 Connor as Vermont'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, Connor 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 catcher concluded her prep career with a .512 batting average and set school records for hits (103), home runs (23) and RBI (113). A three-time First Team All-Metro selection, Connor led the Comets (16-3) to a state championship in 2019. She batted .541 for the season, with 11 home runs, 50 RBI and an on-base percentage of .590.

Also a soccer and hockey standout, Connor has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, a suicide-prevention initiative, food-donation drives and youth sports programs. "I've coached for 33 years and have coached some very talented players, including three previous Gatorade winners," said BFA-St. Albans coach Bert Berthiaume. "Meghan Connor is the best player that I've coached. It was disappointing to have her lose her senior year, but she has left her mark on the program."

Connor has maintained a 3.53 GPA in the classroom. She will attend Endicott College, where she will play softball.

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.

Connor joins Gatorade Vermont Softball Players of the Year Sarah Harvey (2018-19, Missisquoi Valley Union High School), Riley Magoon (2017-18, Colchester High School), Payton Buxton (2016-17, Middlebury Union High School), Allison Rutz (2015-16, Essex High School), and Baylee Ports (2014-15, Mount Anthony Union 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).

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