

**HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Delani Buckner of Herbert Hoover High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade West Virginia Softball Player of the Year. Buckner is the second Gatorade West Virginia Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Herbert Hoover 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 Buckner as West Virginia'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, Buckner 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 right-handed pitcher was named a PGF Northeast Region All-American in 2020 and concluded her prep career with a 52-3 record, a 0.53 ERA and victories in the last three Class AA state championship games. The state's Gatorade Softball Player of the Year as a sophomore, Buckner was the West Virginia Sports Writers Association Player of the Year as a junior. She posted an 20-1 record with a 0.33 ERA in 2019, striking out 273 batters in 127 innings pitched while issuing just 18 walks. Buckner also batted .495 with two home runs and 33 RBI.

Vice President of her senior class, Buckner has volunteered locally on behalf of blood-donation drives and youth sports programs. "Delani is a dream for any coach," said Herbert Hoover High School coach Missy Smith. "She pushes herself and then encourages those around her to raise their level of play. She's a gifted athlete, but off the field she's an even better person than she is a player."

Buckner has maintained a 4.41 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Appalachian State University.

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 Buckner joins Gatorade West Virginia Softball Players of the Year Caiti Mathes (2018-19, Hurricane High School), Katie Adams (2016-17, Hurricane High School), Alexee Haynes (2015-16, Sissonville High School), and Ali Burdette (2014-15, Buffalo 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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