

**SPAIN PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 18, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Annabelle Widra of Spain Park High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year**. Widra is the first Gatorade Alabama Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Spain Park 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 Widra as Alabama'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, Widra joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Cat 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 and shortstop led the Jaguars to a 35-7 record this past season, posting a 20-5 record with a 1.31 ERA. Widra struck out 236 batters and walked just 12 in 123 innings pitched. Alabama's Miss Softball, she also batted .490 with 15 home runs and 47 RBI. A Premier Girls Fastpitch All-American, Widra is a five-time All-State honoree and the All-South Metro Player of the Year. She was ranked as the nation's No. 8 recruit in the Class of 2021 by Extra Inning Softball.

Also a talented dancer, Widra has served as a special education student aide in her school and has volunteered locally on behalf of youth softball programs. "Widra throws the ball in the low 60s and she has a rise ball, screwball and curve, all of them with late break," said Lexi Myers ShROUT, head coach at Hoover High. "A deceiving change-up too. She also really swings the bat well—just very hard to pitch to."

Widra has maintained a 3.80 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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 & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Widra joins recent Gatorade Alabama Softball Players of the Year Shelby Lowe (2019-20, Pickens Academy), Kaylyn Dismukes (2018-19, Holtville High School), Leanna Johnson (2017-18, Brantley High School), and Kendall Beth Sides (2016-17, Sumiton Christian School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Widra has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Widra is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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