

**IOWA CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 18, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ayana Lindsey of Iowa City High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year**. Lindsey is the first Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Iowa City 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 Lindsey as Iowa'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, Lindsey 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-5 senior shortstop and pitcher led the Little Hawks (18-5) to the Class 5A regional final last season. Lindsey batted .500 with 12 home runs, 31 RBI and 18 stolen bases. A two-time First Team All-State honoree, she posted an 8-5 record in the circle with a 2.25 ERA. Lindsey was also the Mississippi Valley Conference Athlete of the Year and was selected to the Des Moines Register All-Iowa Elite Team.

Lindsey has volunteered on behalf of her school's guidance office and has served as a mentor for incoming freshmen. "Ayana Lindsey is a great all-around player," said Jeff Kelley, head coach at Iowa City Liberty High. "Besides being an excellent pitcher, she is a great baserunner, hits for both average and power and plays an outstanding shortstop."

Lindsey has maintained a 4.11 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Northwestern University this fall. Iowa—distinct from the other 48 states sanctioning softball—begins its high school season in conjunction with Memorial Day, which results in the annual Gatorade honor being based upon candidates' previous scholastic season and offseason club/showcase performance, if applicable.

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.

Lindsey joins recent Gatorade Iowa Softball Players of the Year Mikayla Houge (2019-20, Collins-Maxwell High School), Kaylin Kinney (2018-19, Kennedy High School), Alexia Lara (2017-18, Pleasant Valley High School), and Megan Weber (2016-17, Kennedy High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Lindsey has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Lindsey 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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