

**FORT ZUMWALT WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Julia Crenshaw of Fort Zumwalt West High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year**. Crenshaw is the second Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Fort Zumwalt West 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 Crenshaw as Missouri'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, Crenshaw 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-10 senior shortstop led the Jaguars (18-5) to the Class 5 quarterfinals this past season. Crenshaw batted .619 with 10 home runs, 35 RBI, 42 runs scored and an OPS of 2.063. The St. Louis All-Metro Player of the Year, she was also a two-time First Team All-State honoree and the Gateway Athletic Conference South Division Player of the Year. Crenshaw was ranked as the nation's No. 2 Prospect in the Class of 2021 by Extra Inning Softball.

Crenshaw has volunteered locally on behalf of the Leader in Me League—an elementary school leadership initiative—and youth sports programs. "Julia Crenshaw is just a superior talent," said Zack Sheets, head coach at Francis Howell Central High. "She's a great athlete and she has all five tools. She's a pure shortstop who can hit a home run on any field against anyone."

Crenshaw has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Missouri 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.

Crenshaw joins recent Gatorade Missouri Softball Players of the Year Mac Morgan (2019-20, Sherwood High School), Makenna Kliethermes (2018-19, Blair Oaks High School), Gabi Deters (2017-18, Bowling Green High School), and Madison Preston (2016-17, Centralia High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Crenshaw has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Crenshaw 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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