

**ARTESIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **RyLee Crandall of Artesia High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade New Mexico Softball Player of the Year**. Crandall is the second Gatorade New Mexico Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Artesia 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 Crandall as New Mexico'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, Crandall 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 junior right-handed pitcher and infielder had led the Bulldogs to a 16-2 record and a berth in the Class 4A state tournament at the time of her selection. Crandall compiled a 10-1 mark with a 0.22 earned run average in the circle, allowing just six walks with 131 strikeouts in 62.1 innings pitched. At the plate, the 2019 First Team All-State selection posted a .463 batting average with nine home runs, 33 runs scored, 24 runs batted in and a 1.259 slugging percentage.

An elected member of her school's student council, Crandall has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with her church youth group, and she has donated her time as a youth softball coach. "RyLee Crandall is not only an outstanding athlete, but also a first-class leader, teammate, student, citizen and human," said Artesia High head coach Sandra Pulido. "What she brings as a right-handed pitcher and power lefty hitter is incomparable to the leadership she brings to our program. Her desire to compete every day and continue to learn as an athlete and pass that along to the underclassmen is unwavering."

Crandall has maintained a 4.24 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at Baylor University beginning in the fall of 2022.

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.

Crandall joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Softball Players of the Year Brianna Gallegos (2019-20, Rio Rancho High School), Briana Martinez (2018-19, Rio Rancho High School), Kali Crandall (2017-18, Artesia High School), and Andrea Howard (2016-17, La Cueva High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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