

**SCITUATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 **Haley Venturini of Scituate High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year**. Venturini is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Scituate 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 Venturini as Rhode Island'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, Venturini 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 2018-19 Gatorade State Player of the Year, the 5-foot-9 senior right-handed pitcher had led the Spartans to a 11-1 record and a berth in the Division II state quarterfinals at the time of her selection. Venturini compiled an 11-0 mark in the circle with a 0.10 earned run average through 12 games. She had allowed just seven hits to go with 173 strikeouts in 71 innings pitched. At the plate, the two-time First Team All-State selection posted a .486 batting average entering the quarters with three home runs, 14 runs scored, 14 runs batted in and a .800 slugging percentage. She began the 2021 postseason with 742 strikeouts in her prep softball career.

Venturini has volunteered locally with the Scituate Senior Center, preparing and delivering meals to seniors during the pandemic. Also a peer tutor, she has donated her time as a youth softball coach as well. "Haley is without a doubt the best pitcher in Rhode Island this season and she can hit, too," said Henry Coleman, head coach of Mount St. Charles High. "She has solid velocity, but what makes her even tougher to face is the command she has of all her pitches. It makes her almost unhittable."

Venturini has maintained a weighted 4.13 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Hofstra University (N.Y.) 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.

Two-time winner Venturini joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Softball Players of the Year Kayla Baptista (2019-20, La Salle Academy), Ali Blanchard (2017-18, Moses Brown School), and Kiara Oliver (2016-17, North Kingstown High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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