

**PULASKI COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 30, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Riley Hull of Pulaski County High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year**. Hull is the first Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pulaski County 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 Hull as Kentucky's best high school softball player. Hull 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 state's returning Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year, the 5-foot-5 senior catcher posted a .605 batting average with 57 runs scored and 51 runs batted in this past season, leading the Maroons (26-10) to the 12th Region semifinals. Hull knocked out 22 doubles and blasted eight home runs while compiling a .669 on-base percentage and a 1.061 slugging percentage. Rated as the No. 38 recruit in the Class of 2021 by Extra Inning, Hull walked 19 times and struck out just once, which was the only strikeout of her prep softball career. A two-time Johnny Bench Award winner, awarded to the top catcher in Kentucky, she threw out 8 of 20 runners attempting to steal a base.

Hull has volunteered locally at a women's shelter and as a youth softball coach. "Riley is going to put the ball in play and find two to three hits each game," said Jordan Ward, head coach of Lincoln County High. "Each one might not be a rocket, but she finds ways to get on base. She also completely shuts down any thoughts of a running game behind the plate."

Hull has maintained a weighted 4.05 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Mississippi State University 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 Hull joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Softball Players of the Year Allie Skaggs (2018-19, Ballard High School), and Montana Fouts (2017-18 & 2016-17, East Carter High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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