

**CHANHASSEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Sydney Schwartz of Chanhassen High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Minnesota Softball Player of the Year**. Schwartz is the second Gatorade Minnesota Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Chanhassen 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 Schwartz as Minnesota's best high school softball player. Schwartz 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 junior right-handed pitcher owned a 21-2 record with a 0.95 earned run average this past season, leading the Storm (22-3) to the Class AAAA state tournament semifinals. Schwartz allowed just 52 hits while striking out 287 batters in 147.1 innings pitched. At the plate, Schwartz posted a .578 batting average with 11 home runs, 26 runs scored and 31 runs batted in. She earned 26 walks, including five intentional passes in one game, and posted a .713 on-base percentage and a 1.219 slugging percentage.

Schwartz has volunteered locally as part of an elementary school literacy-outreach program and as a youth softball coach. "We have had an unbelievable record at Chanhassen over the last five years with dominating hitters on the team, and yet we have never seen anyone that can hit the ball like Sydney," said Joe Coenen, head coach of Chanhassen High. "She is one of the top pitchers in the state and may be the most dominant hitter."

Schwartz has maintained a 3.56 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Schwartz joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Softball Players of the Year Allison Benning (2019-20, Stillwater Area High School), Ava Dueck (2018-19, Maple Grove Senior High School), Emily Hansen (2017-18, Buffalo High School), and Marybeth Olson (2016-17, Chanhassen High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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