

**SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Jocelyn Erickson** of **Sandra Day O'Connor High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year**. Erickson is the third Gatorade Arizona Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sandra Day O'Connor 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 Erickson as Arizona'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, Erickson 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-9 junior senior catcher posted a .624 batting average with 25 home runs and 58 runs batted in this past season, leading the Eagles (22-11) to the Conference 6A state tournament. Erickson, who is ranked as the nation's No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2022 by Extra Inning Softball, also banded out 10 doubles, scored 50 runs and walked 28 times, compiling a .704 on-base percentage and a 1.581 slugging percentage. As a catcher, the Conference 6A Player of the Year threw out 4-of-8 would-be base stealers and picked off five runners at first base.

The president of her seminary class at her church, Erickson has volunteered locally with Feed My Starving Children and as a youth softball coach. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Jocelyn is the best player in the state," said Rich Hamilton, head coach of Red Mountain High. "We couldn't get her out. Offensively, she controls the plate. Pitchers have to be so careful that they usually make a mistake. Defensively, she made you change your offensive plan because of her skills as a catcher."

Erickson has maintained a weighted 4.12 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Oklahoma 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Erickson joins recent Gatorade Arizona Softball Players of the Year Kaitlyn Terry (2020-21, Greenway High School), Rylee Holtorf (2019-20, Sandra Day O'Connor High School), Carlie Scupin (2018-19, Tucson Magnet School), and Marissa Schuld (2017-18, Pinnacle High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Erickson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Erickson is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.