

**OAKS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 **Micaela Kastor** of **Oaks Christian School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade California Softball Player of the Year**. Kastor is the first Gatorade California Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Oaks Christian 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 Kastor as California'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, Kastor 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-6 senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop led the Lions to a 34-1 record and the Southern California Regional Division I Tournament championship this past season. Kastor compiled a 25-1 record in the circle with a 0.60 earned run average and striking out 255 batters while allowing just 55 hits and 23 walks in 151.1 innings pitched. Ranked as the nation's No. 27 recruit in the Class of 2022 by Extra Inning Softball, she batted .513 with 11 home runs, 40 runs scored, 39 runs batted in and a 1.018 slugging percentage.

Kastor has volunteered as a peer tutor and with the Special Olympics. She has also donated her time locally as a youth softball coach and lifeguard. "The hype Micaela has is legit," said Bryan Matney, head coach of Newbury Park High. "Her mound presence and confidence is amazing. And then she backs that up with a 65-plus mph fastball and a rise ball that is just devastating. As for hitting, she is the complete hitter. She hits for average or just plain hits bombs."

Kastor has maintained a weighted 4.21 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Kastor joins recent Gatorade California Softball Players of the Year Sydney Somerndike (2020-21, Villa Park High School), Tiare Jennings (2019-20, St. Anthony High School), Nicole May (2018-19, Foothill High School), and Megan Faraimo (2017-18, Cathedral Catholic 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, Kastor 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. Kastor 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.

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