

**RED LION CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 **Peyton Pusey** of **Red Lion Christian Academy** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Delaware Softball Player of the Year**. Pusey is the first Gatorade Delaware Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Red Lion Christian Academy.

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 Pusey as Delaware'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, Pusey 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 center fielder led the Lions (13-4) to the second round of the state tournament this past season. Pusey batted .550 with five home runs, 20 RBI, 27 runs scored and 16 stolen bases. The Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association Player of the Year, she is a two-time First Team All-State honoree and was selected to play in the Blue-Gold All-Star Game.

Also a talented artist, Pusey has served as leader of her school's senior fundraising and special events committees, and has volunteered locally on behalf of her church. "Peyton Pusey is the real deal," said Nina Marcano, head coach at Middletown High. "She's great on both sides of the ball. She can hit quality pitching, she runs the bases well and, defensively, she's a huge threat—she makes great reads on the ball and has a really strong arm to make runners think twice about going."

Pusey has maintained a weighted 4.56 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at Marist College 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.

Pusey joins recent Gatorade Delaware Softball Players of the Year Graceyn Frost (2020-21, Delaware Military Academy), Tayler Vitola (2019-20 & 2018-19, Appoquinimink High School), and Nicole Marcon (2017-18, Caravel Academy), 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, Pusey 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. Pusey 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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