

**LEMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Sage Mardjetko** of **Lemont High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year**. Mardjetko is the second Gatorade Illinois Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lemont 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 Mardjetko as Illinois' best high school softball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Softball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Mardjetko 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.).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-10 junior right-handed pitcher had led the Indians to a 32-6 record and a berth in the Class 3A state semifinals. Mardjetko compiled a 17-1 mark in the circle with a 0.27 earned run average and 303 strikeouts through 38 games. She posted eight no-hitters, including two perfect games with one coming in a 1-0 victory over Metamora High in the Eastside Centre Super-Sectional. Ranked as the nation's No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2023 by Extra Inning Softball, she owned a .434 batting average with two home runs and a .493 slugging percentage.

A member of the Lemont High Athletic Council, Mardjetko has volunteered locally with Young Hearts for Life, which is a heart-health screening program, and as a peer tutor. "Sage is the best," said Colleen Phelan, head coach of Marist High School. "She's been close to unhittable. She has a killer rise that's almost impossible to lay off."

Mardjetko has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to play softball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Mardjetko joins recent Gatorade Illinois Softball Players of the Year Abby Dunning (2020-21, Marist High School) and Bailey Dowling (2019-20, 2018-19 & 2017-18, St. Joseph-Ogden 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, Mardjetko 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. Mardjetko 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.