

**LEXINGTON CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Abby Hammond** of **Lexington Catholic High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year**. Hammond is the first Gatorade Kentucky Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lexington Catholic 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 Hammond as Kentucky'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, Hammond 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-8 freshman right-handed pitcher had led the Knights to a 28-6 record and a berth in the state tournament quarterfinals this past season. Hammond compiled a 28-5 record with a 0.69 earned run average through 34 games. She struck out 313 batters while allowing just 30 walks in 212 innings pitched. At the plate, entering the quarterfinals, Hammond was batting .505 with 12 home runs, 14 doubles, 30 runs scored and 41 runs batted in. She was the Class 2A State Player of the Year as an eighth-grader in 2021.

Hammond has volunteered locally at the Catholic Action Center and with cancer patients at the Kentucky Children's Hospital. She has also donated her time as a youth softball and basketball coach. "Abby is flat-out legit," said Brian Deem, head coach of Boyle County High School. "She is the reason they are where they are in the postseason. In the circle, she has movement, can spot her pitches, has solid velocity and great poise."

Hammond has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore year of high school 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.

Hammond joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Softball Players of the Year Riley Hull (2020-21 & 2019-20, Pulaski County High School), Allie Skaggs (2018-19, Ballard High School), and Montana Fouts (2017-18, East Carter 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, Hammond 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. Hammond 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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