

**SOUTH LYON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 **Ava Bradshaw** of **South Lyon High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Michigan Softball Player of the Year**. Bradshaw is the first Gatorade Michigan Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Lyon 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 Bradshaw as Michigan'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, Bradshaw 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-7 sophomore right-handed pitcher had led the Lions (33-3) to the Division 1 regional playoffs. Bradshaw owned a 28-2 record with a 0.88 ERA through 34 games, striking out 314 batters in 175.2 innings pitched, while walking just 31. She also batted .389 with three home runs and 34 RBI. The Total Softball Player of the Year and the Metro Detroit Player of the Year as a freshman, she's ranked as the nation's No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2024 by Extra Inning Softball.

Bradshaw has volunteered locally on behalf of the Miracle League and youth softball clinics. "As a competitor, Ava Bradshaw is as fierce as anyone I've seen at the high school level," said Paul Nieto, head coach at South Lyon East High School. "She engages in every pitch and competes to win every inning. She's a dominant pitcher and she also swings the bat with power and consistency. Her skill set is one of the best we've seen."

Bradshaw has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Bradshaw joins recent Gatorade Michigan Softball Players of the Year Kali Heivilin (2020-21, Three Rivers High School), Gabi Salo (2019-20, Escanaba High School), Lauren Esman (2018-19, Gull Lake High School), and Jenny Bressler (2017-18, Plymouth 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, Bradshaw 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. Bradshaw 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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