

**LEE'S SUMMIT NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Cierra Harrison** of **Lee's Summit North High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year**. Harrison is the first Gatorade Missouri Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lee's Summit North 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 Harrison as Missouri'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, Harrison 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-5 senior right-handed pitcher led the Broncos (25-10) to the district finals this past season. Harrison posted a 20-7 record with a 1.03 ERA, striking out 369 batters in 176.1 innings pitched while surrendering just 83 hits and 34 walks. A National Fastpitch Coaches Association First Team All-Region selection, she also batted .345 with 15 RBI. She is a three-time First Team All-State honoree and is ranked as the nation's No. 16 Prospect in the Class of 2022 by Extra Inning Softball.

A member of her school's Student Athletic Advisory Council, Harrison has volunteered locally on behalf of a food pantry and a special education classroom. "Cierra Harrison is a complete game-changer," said Scott Howard, head coach at Liberty High School. "She throws absolute gas and she can put her pitches exactly where she wants. Nothing ever seemed to rattle her."

Harrison has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Missouri 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.

Harrison joins recent Gatorade Missouri Softball Players of the Year Julia Crenshaw (2020-21, Fort Zumwalt West High School), Mac Morgan (2019-20, Sherwood High School), Makenna Kliethermes (2018-19, Blair Oaks High School), and Gabi Deters (2017-18, Bowling Green 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, Harrison 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. Harrison 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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