

**OWYHEE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 9, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Samantha Hatzenbeller** of **Owyhee High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Idaho Softball Player of the Year**. Hatzenbeller is the first Gatorade Idaho Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Owyhee 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 Hatzenbeller as Idaho'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, Hatzenbeller joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jordyn Bahl (2020-21, Papillion-La Vista High School, Neb.), Megan Faraimo (2017-18, Cathedral Catholic High School, Calif.), Rachel Garcia (2014-15, Highland High School, Calif.) and Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress Spring High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-5 junior center fielder and right-handed pitcher went 9-for-16 with four doubles, three home runs and seven RBI in the 5A state tournament, leading the Storm (26-5) to the 5A title this past season. She batted .510 with 53 RBI, 16 home runs and 49 runs scored. In the circle, the First Team All-Southern Idaho Conference selection posted a 4-4 record with 62 strikeouts and a 3.89 ERA.

Hatzenbeller has volunteered locally with Sources of Strength, a leadership group focused on suicide prevention. She also has donated her time as a peer tutor to students with special needs. "Samantha is a great player," said Rocky Mountain High School head coach Brian White. "She is strong in the outfield and can help out in the circle when needed. She's a great hitter and good on the bases. Samantha has a very high softball IQ and is just an absolute competitor."

Hatzenbeller has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school in the 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.

Hatzenbeller joins recent Gatorade Idaho Softball Players of the Year Delaney Keith (2021-22 & 2020-21, Skyview High School), Gracie Walters (2019-20, Ridgevue High School), and Kaylan Walker (2018-19, Rocky Mountain High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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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