

**WINTERSSET HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 **Jena Young** of **Winterset High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year**. Young is the first Gatorade Iowa Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Winterset 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 Young as Iowa'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, Young 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-6 senior shortstop led the Huskies to a 37-4 record and the Class 4A state championship last season. The Des Moines Register All-Iowa Player of the Year, Young led the state in home runs (22), slugging percentage (1.346) and total bases (179). She batted .624 with 55 RBI and scored 70 runs, all of which were tops in 4A.

Young has volunteered locally as a referee for youth basketball leagues and an instructor at youth basketball camps. She also has donated her time giving hitting lessons to youth softball players. "Jena Young is a stellar softball player," said Steve Schlafke, head coach at Dallas Center-Grimes High School. "She has great all-around skills in every area of the game. She's passionate about the sport, plays the game at the highest of levels, and has few weaknesses as a player. I love her competitive spirit and enjoy watching her play."

Young has maintained a 3.77 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to play softball on scholarship at the University of Iowa 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.

Young joins recent Gatorade Iowa Softball Players of the Year Jalen Adams (2021-22, Fort Dodge Senior High School), Ayana Lindsey (2020-21, Iowa City High School), Mikayla Houge (2019-20, Collins-Maxwell High School), and Kaylin Kinney (2018-19, Kennedy 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.

###