

**SHELDON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE OREGON SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 9, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Payton Burnham** of **Sheldon High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Oregon Softball Player of the Year**. Burnham is the first Gatorade Oregon Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Sheldon 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 Burnham as Oregon'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, Burnham 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 Springs High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-8 junior right-handed pitcher led the Fighting Irish to a 30-1 record and the Class 6A state championship this past season. Burnham owned a 30-1 mark in the circle with a 0.19 earned run average and 375 strikeouts in 186 innings pitched, and she fired shutouts in each of Sheldon's five postseason games on the way to the state title. At the plate, she batted .404 with five home runs, 35 RBI and a .674 slugging percentage.

Burnham has trained both horses and dogs. She has volunteered locally as a youth softball pitching and hitting coach. "Payton is a tireless worker; she has worked incredibly hard to become the player she is today," said Mike Faulconer, head coach of Sheldon High School. "Payton's statistics speak for themselves. She stands alone in a class by herself."

Burnham has maintained a 3.31 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Burnham joins recent Gatorade Oregon Softball Players of the Year Addisen Fisher (2021-20 & 2020-21, Bend High School), Taylor Ebbs (2019-20, McNary High School), and Ariel Carlson (2018-19, Marist Catholic 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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