

WAMEGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KANSAS SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 7, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Peyton Hardenburger** of **Wamego High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year**. Hardenburger is the first Gatorade Kansas Softball Player of the Year to be chosen from Wamego High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Hardenburger as Kansas’ best high school softball player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Amanda Freed (1997-98, Pacifica High School, Calif.), Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress Springs High School, Texas), Rachel Garcia (2014-15 & 2012-13, Highland High School, Calif.) and Ava Brown (2022-23 & 2021-22, Lake Creek High School, Texas).

The 5-foot-8 junior right-handed pitcher led the Red Raiders (23-2) to the 4A state championship this past season with a three-game state tournament run that included 31 innings pitched, 63 strikeouts and back-to-back no-hitters. Hardenburger compiled a 15-1 record with a 0.30 ERA and 288 strikeouts in 117 innings this spring. She also batted .459 with 23 RBI and compiled an OPS of 1.265.

Hardenburger has volunteered locally by collecting donations for charitable organizations that combat child trafficking. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. “Her competitiveness and mental toughness is where it starts with her,” said Tyler Hampton, head coach at Clearwater High School. “She was pretty unflappable for the 17-inning game we played against her [in the state quarterfinals]. For her to throw 17 innings against us, and then come back the next day and throw a seven-inning no-hitter in the semis and a seven-inning no-hitter in the championship is pretty remarkable.”

Hardenburger has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. She has verbally committed to play softball on scholarship at the University of Tennessee in the fall of 2025.

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.

Hardenburger joins recent Gatorade Kansas Softball Players of the Year Madison Walker (2022-23, Olathe West High School), Nija Canady (2021-22 & 2020-21, Topeka High School) and Tatum Clopton (2019-20, Lawrence Free State High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$4.9 million in grants to winners across more than 1,900 organizations.

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 X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.