

DESTINY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE CALIFORNIA SOFTBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 9, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Ayla Tuua of Destiny Christian Academy is the 2024-25 Gatorade California Softball Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Tuua as California's best high school softball player, and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Cat Osterman (2000-01, Cypress Springs High School, Texas), Rachel Garcia (2014-15 & 2012-13, Highland High School, Calif.), Ava Brown (2022-23, Lake Creek High School, Texas) and Addisen Fisher (2023-24, Bend High School, Oregon).

At the time of her selection, the 5-foot-11 junior right-handed pitcher, first baseman and outfielder had led the Lions to a 22-2 record and a berth in the Northern California Regional Division II Tournament quarterfinals. Tuua compiled a 12-0 record in the circle with a 0.46 earned run average through 24 games, striking out 163 batters while allowing just 21 hits in 75.2 innings pitched. Ranked as the nation’s No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2026 by MaxPreps and a two-time Sacramento Bee Player of the Year, she entered the postseason round of eight with a .500 batting average, including six home runs, 30 runs and 26 RBI.

A member of the California Scholarship Federation, Tuua is the president of the Destiny Christian Polynesian Club. She has volunteered locally crocheting and donating beanies to local hospitals for newborn babies. She has also donated her time as a peer tutor and youth softball coach. “Ayla Tuua is by far the best softball player I have seen in the area in several years,” said Steve Burton, head coach of Rio Linda High School. “When we faced her in our first meeting she was nothing short of amazing. She shut us down and finished the game with 21 strikeouts. We have been a great hitting team, but she had us off-balance the entire game.”

Tuua has maintained a weighted 4.15 GPA in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to receive athletic aid to play softball at Louisiana State University beginning in the fall of 2026.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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.

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 \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X (Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).

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