

## **WOODHAVEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MICHIGAN BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 23, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Colin Czajkowski of Woodhaven High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Michigan Baseball Player of the Year. Czajkowski is the first Gatorade Michigan Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Woodhaven 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 Czajkowski as Michigan's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Czajkowski joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo High School, Mich.), Jon Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Preparatory School, Wash.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman High School, Tenn.), Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas), Rick Porcello (2006-2007, Seaton Hall Preparatory School, N.J.) and Kris Bryant (2009-10, Bonanza High School, Nev.).

The 6-foot-4, 195-pound senior left-handed pitcher and outfielder had led the Warriors to a 26-2 record at the time of his selection with the Division 1 district postseason set to begin on May 28. Czajkowski compiled a 8-0 record on the mound along with a save through 28 games, firing a no-hitter and fanning 92 batters in 42.2 innings pitched. He had surrendered just two earned runs through May 20, posting a 0.33 ERA and a 0.703 WHIP while holding opponents to a .099 batting average. Entering the stretch run, Czajkowski was batting .362 with nine doubles, a triple, two home runs and 36 RBI, posting an OPS of 1.040. He'd also scored 33 runs and stolen 21 bases in 23 attempts. Rated as the nation's No. 226 prospect in the Class of 2019 by Perfect Game, he is a two-time Perfect Game Preseason All-American, the Preseason State Player of the Year as named by Prep Baseball Report and earned Second Team All-State honors in 2018.

An All-League selection in football and basketball (three times), Czajkowski played on nine varsity teams in high school, eight of which won league championships. He serves as a Link Crew Leader at Woodhaven and is a member of the school's Athletic Leadership Committee. He also volunteers locally working with special needs athletes on behalf of the Victory Day program and the ARC Games. Czajkowski has also donated his time as part of an elementary literacy-outreach campaign and has served church-supplied meals to the needy in addition to instructing and officiating for youth sports camps and recreational leagues. A member of his school's DECA entrepreneurial program, he helped his school to a national title this year. "In the last 30 to 35 years, Colin Czajkowski sits in a special class of talent along with (longtime major leaguers) Steve Avery and JJ Putz," says Trenton High head coach Todd Szalka. "His ability to dominate a game on the mound, track a fly ball down in centerfield, or hit a home run at the plate is special. Without him, Woodhaven doesn't make it to the state finals in 2018, or maintain the top spot throughout 2019."

Czajkowski has maintained a 3.55 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Michigan beginning 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Czajkowski joins recent Gatorade Michigan Baseball Players of the Year Spencer Schwellenbach (2017-18, Heritage High School), Steve Mann (2016-17, Detroit Country Day School), Tommy Henry (2015-16, Portage Northern High School), Luke Shilling (2014-15, Notre Dame Preparatory School), and Kory Young (2013-14, Rockford High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Czajkowski also has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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