

CANEY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KANSAS BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (May 23, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Jace Kaminska of Caney Valley High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kansas Baseball Player of the Year**. Kaminska is the first Gatorade Kansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Caney Valley 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 Kaminska as Kansas' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Kaminska 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-2, 200-pound junior right-handed pitcher and shortstop led the Bullpups to a 12-5 record and a berth in the Class 3A regional tournament this past season. Kaminska compiled a 4-0 record on the mound with 85 strikeouts in 32 innings pitched, issuing just three walks and holding opponents to a microscopic .067 batting average. The Caney Valley ace did not surrender an earned run all season, threw two perfect games and fanned a state-record 29 consecutive hitters, shattering the previous mark of 12 in a row set in 1953. Kaminska also batted .511 with two home runs and 17 RBI, posting an OPS of 1.544. An All-Tri Valley Honorable Mention in basketball this past winter, he is a First Team All-State selection, a two-time All-Area honoree and was the 2018 Class 3A Pitcher of the Year.

A devoted parishioner of the Tyro Christian Church and a member of the National Honor Society, Kaminska has donated his time as a recreation league umpire for three years and has volunteered locally making up care packages for active-duty military. He has also served on behalf of the Caney Recreation Commission, laying sod and planting rye on the city baseball field. Kaminska helps out on his family's fifth-generation farm on a daily basis and enjoys working cattle, fishing, and working on cars and trucks. "I believe Jace is very worthy of this award," said Dan Wilson, head coach at Erie High School. "My team has played Jace for three years now, and he's gotten better each season. It's easy to see how naturally this game comes to him. I don't know of a kid we've played that has elevated his game to such a high level in such a short amount of time. Whether he is pitching, behind the plate as a catcher, or in the field, his enjoyment of the game comes through."

Kaminska has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 1 in his class and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at Wichita State University beginning in the fall of 2020.

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.

Kaminska joins recent Gatorade Kansas Baseball Players of the Year Peyton Carson (2017-18, Shawnee Heights High School), Conner VanCleave (2016-17, Holcomb High School), Riley Pint (2015-16 & 2014-15, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School) and Braden Minor (2013-14, Eisenhower High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Kaminska 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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