

**MORGANTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 1, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Slade Barton of Morgantown High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade West Virginia Baseball 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 excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Barton as West Virginia’s best high school baseball player and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park, TX), MacKenzie Gore (2016-17, Whiteville High School, NC) and Seth Hernandez (2024-25, Corona High School, CA).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-3, 210-pound senior right-handed pitcher and infielder had led the Mohigans (27-5) to a berth in the AAAA state tournament. Barton compiled a record of 7-0 over 33.1 innings on the mound, posting a 1.68 ERA while fanning 47 batters. He also hit .368 through 32 games and recorded .455 on-base percentage.

Barton has volunteered locally at food banks and by making goodwill visits to pediatric cancer patients. He has also donated his time helping the elderly in his community with winter cleanup tasks. “Slade has demonstrated elite-level performance on the baseball field, which sets him apart from his peers,” said Michael Davis, head coach at George Washington High School, which Barton attended through his junior year. “As Slade’s coach for the first three years of his high school career, I’ve had the privilege of watching him develop into one of the most outstanding student-athletes I’ve encountered in my 15 years of coaching.”

Barton has maintained a 3.78 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play baseball at West Virginia University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. 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 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 \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 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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