

## ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Hayden Walker of St. Pius X High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade New Mexico Baseball Player of the Year**. Walker is the first Gatorade New Mexico Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Pius X 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 Walker as New Mexico'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, Walker 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, 175-pound junior left-handed pitcher led the Sartans to 24-5 record and the Class 4A state title this past season. Walker compiled a 9-1 record on the mound with one save, a 0.48 ERA and 95 strikeouts in 58 innings pitched. He issued 19 walks, holding opponents to a .090 batting average and posting a WHIP of 0.621. Rated as the nation's No. 206 left-handed pitcher in the Class of 2020 by Perfect Game, he earned Second Team All-State honors as a sophomore.

A weekly volunteer at the Roadrunner Food Bank, Walker also donates his time to the Albuquerque Baseball Academy "Throw Cancer a Curve" charitable initiative. This season, he partnered with Kershaw's Challenge, a faith-based non-profit empowering at-risk children that was launched by three-time Cy Young Award winning Los Angeles Dodgers lefty Clayton Kershaw, the 2005-06 Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year. As part of the organization's Strikeout to Serve drive, Walker solicited \$1 donations for every strikeout he recorded, raising more than \$1,000 for charity with his season total of 95. "Hayden Walker is a tremendous expression of New Mexico high school baseball values at their finest," said Tim Campos, head coach at Manzano High. "He has an uncommon work ethic, which has allowed him to be an outlier amongst his peer group. His high character, success on and off the field and leadership are all deserving of the highest honors."

Walker has maintained a 3.46 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at Pepperdine 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.

Walker joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Baseball Players of the Year Chase Silseth (2017-18, Piedra Vista High School), Trevor Rogers (2016-17, Carlsbad High School), Nathaniel Garley (2015-16, Eldorado High School), and Jared Mang (2014-15 & 2013-14, Los Alamos High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Walker 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](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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