

**BUFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Dylan Lesko of Buford High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year**. Lesko is the first Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Buford 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 Lesko as Georgia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Lesko 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-3, 197-pound junior right-handed pitcher and infielder compiled an 11-0 record on the mound with a 0.35 ERA and 112 strikeouts in 60 innings this past season, leading the Wolves to a 32-2 record and a berth in the second round of the Class 6A playoffs. The nation's No. 2 prospect in the Class of 2022 as ranked by Perfect Game and PrepBaseballReport, he held opposing hitters to a .126 batting average and a 0.68 WHIP while contributing offensively by posting a .417 average, 25 RBIs and an OPS of 1.054.

A member of Buford High's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, Lesko has volunteered locally at the North Gwinnett Co-Op, which provides food and services to the needy. He has also donated his time packing, loading and delivering food to underserved families each Thanksgiving. In addition, he has raised funds to support the underprivileged during the Christmas holidays. "Dylan Lesko is, without a doubt, the most talented player I have coached in 30 years," said Buford High head coach Stuart Chester. "His greatest quality is his character and ability to lead and make everyone better and feel important. He always puts others first."

Lesko has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University beginning in the fall of 2022.

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. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Lesko joins recent Gatorade Georgia Baseball Players of the Year Jordan Walker (2019-20, Decatur High School), C.J. Abrams (2018-19, Blessed Trinity High School), Kumar Rocker (2017-18, North Oconee High School), and Drew Waters (2016-17, Etowah High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Lesko has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Lesko is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

###