

**MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 **Braden Montgomery of Madison Central High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Mississippi Baseball Player of the Year**. Montgomery is the second Gatorade Mississippi Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Madison Central 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 Montgomery as Mississippi'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, Montgomery 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, 190-pound senior outfielder and right-handed pitcher led the Jaguars to a 34-2 record, the Class 6A state championship and a No. 5 national ranking by Baseball America this past season. The nation's No. 23 draft prospect as ranked by Perfect Game, Montgomery posted a .479 batting average with seven home runs, 50 RBI and 30 runs scored along with an OPS of 1.465. He also compiled a 9-0 record on the mound with a 0.74 ERA and 116 strikeouts against 27 walks in 56.2 innings.

A member of the National Honor Society, Montgomery has volunteered locally as a youth baseball coach. "Braden Montgomery is a sharp kid with all kinds of athletic ability," said K.K. Aldridge, head coach at Northwest Rankin High. "His velocity is effortless and he is a true five-tool player. He handles himself very well for a high school senior and I expect a bright future for that young man."

Montgomery has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Stanford University this fall, but is projected as an early-round selection in July's Major League Baseball draft.

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.

Montgomery joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Baseball Players of the Year Blaze Jordan (2019-20, DeSoto Central High School), Colten Keith (2018-19, Biloxi High School), J.T. Ginn (2017-18, Brandon High School), and Trey Shaffer (2016-17, Biloxi High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Montgomery has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Montgomery 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.

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