

**DUTCH FORK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 **Will Taylor of Dutch Fork High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year**. Taylor is the first Gatorade South Carolina Baseball **Player** of the Year to be chosen from Dutch Fork 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 Taylor as South Carolina'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, Taylor 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, 170-pound senior center fielder posted a .450 batting average with seven home runs, 34 runs scored and 33 RBI this past season, leading the Silver Foxes to an 18-6 record and a berth in the Class 5A district final. The nation's No. 12 draft prospect as ranked by Baseball America, Taylor also stole 21 bases and walked 25 five times to compile an on-base percentage of .586 and an OPS of 1.455.

A member of his school's Key Club, Taylor has volunteered locally at a foster care facility and a food bank in addition to donating his time as a youth wrestling coach. "Will Taylor has one of the greatest work ethics of any player I've ever coached," said Dutch Fork High head coach Casey Waites. "He has MLB power and speed. He is all business when he crosses the lines to play, and his baseball knowledge is at a very high level."

Taylor has maintained a 3.49 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Clemson 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.

Taylor joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Caden Grice (2019-20, Riverside High School), Trotter Harlan (2018-19, Hillcrest High School), Geoffrey Gilbert (2017-18, Bishop England High School), and Logan Chapman (2016-17, Easley High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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