

**BAYLOR SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 **Cooper Kinney of Baylor School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Tennessee Baseball Player of the Year**. Kinney is the second Gatorade Tennessee Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Baylor 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 Kinney as Tennessee'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, Kinney 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, 200-pound senior infielder and catcher led the Red Raiders to a 27-4 record and the Division II-AA state championship this past season. Also the 2021 Division II-AA Mr. Baseball winner, Kinney posted a .480 batting average with 10 home runs, 50 RBI, 35 runs scored and an OPS of 1.529. He batted a combined .590 in conference play and the playoffs, and hit .700 with a home run and six RBI in the state tournament.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the National Honor Society, Kinney has volunteered locally as a summer camp counselor and as a youth baseball coach. "Cooper Kinney is by far the best hitter in the state of Tennessee," said Jason Maxwell, head coach at Ensworth High. "He is the consummate team player who can play multiple positions and play them well. On a team loaded with talent, Cooper Kinney proved to be the leader of the pack"

Kinney has maintained a 3.81 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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.

Kinney joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Baseball Players of the Year Robert Hassell (2019-20 & 2018-19, Independence High School), Ryan Weathers (2017-18, Loretto High School), and Spencer Strider (2016-17, Christian Academy of Knoxville), among the state's list of former award winners.

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