

**BAINBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 **J.R. Ritchie of Bainbridge High School** as its **2020-21 Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year**. Ritchie is the first Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bainbridge 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 Ritchie as Washington'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, Ritchie 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, 190-pound junior right-handed pitcher and shortstop led the Spartans to a 16-2 record and the Olympic League North championship this past season. Rated as the nation's No. 10 draft prospect in the Class of 2022 by both Perfect Game and Prep Baseball Report, Ritchie compiled a 6-0 record on the mound with a 0.38 ERA and 54 strikeouts against just six walks in 23.2 innings. At the plate, he posted a .531 batting average with 24 runs scored and an OPS of 1.668.

Ritchie has volunteered locally on behalf of a variety of school fundraisers, while also donating his time as a youth baseball coach. "J.R. Ritchie was electric when we faced him with a mid-90s fastball and a wipeout breaking ball," said Casey Dietz, head coach at Port Angeles High. "In addition to his phenomenal physical ability, he carried himself extremely well, exhibiting composure, mental fortitude and a first-class attitude."

Ritchie has maintained a 3.59 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at UCLA 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.

Ritchie joins recent Gatorade Washington Baseball Players of the Year Malakhi Knight (2019-20, Marysville Getchell High School), Corbin Carroll (2018-19, Lakeside School), Carter Young (2017-18, Selah High School), and Jesse Franklin (2016-17, Seattle Prep), among the state's list of former award winners.

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