

**PIKE LIBERAL ARTS SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (June 3, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Drew Nelson** of **Pike Liberal Arts School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year**. Nelson is the first Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Pike Liberal Arts 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 Nelson as Alabama's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Nelson 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 (2006-07, Seaton Hall Preparatory School, N.J.) and Kris Bryant (2009-10, Bonanza High School, Nev.).

The 6-foot, 200-pound senior left-handed pitcher and outfielder led the Patriots to a 32-4-1 record and a fourth-straight Alabama Independent School Association Class AAA state championship this past season. Nelson compiled a 9-2 record on the mound with a 1.00 ERA, striking out 106 batters while allowing just 18 hits in 49 innings pitched. He fired a two-hitter with 15 strikeouts in a 6-1 win over Glenwood High that clinched the state title. At the plate, he posted a .463 batting average with six home runs, seven doubles, eight triples and a .895 slugging percentage.

The vice president of his school's Calculus Club and co-president of its Young Investors Club, Nelson has volunteered locally with Common Ground Troy, a co-curricular youth development organization. He has also donated his time as a youth baseball coach and instructor. "Drew has been special since the ninth grade, but you can tell he has put in the work to become a complete player," said Tim Fanning, head coach of Glenwood High School. "He was the best guy we faced on the mound all year."

Nelson has maintained a weighted 4.39 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Auburn University this fall.

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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Nelson joins recent Gatorade Alabama Baseball Players of the Year Maddux Bruns (2020-21, UMS-Wright Preparatory School), William Kohn (2019-20, Chilton County High School), Gunnar Henderson (2018-19, Morgan Academy), and Garrett Wade (2017-18, Hartselle High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Nelson has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Nelson is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

###