

**IDAHO FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 3, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Merit Jones** of **Idaho Falls High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Idaho Baseball Player of the Year**. Jones is the third Gatorade Idaho Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Idaho Falls 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 Jones as Idaho'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, Jones 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-4, 195-pound senior outfielder and right-handed pitcher batted .405 with six home runs and 27 RBI, compiling an OPS of 1.404 this past season, leading the Tigers (17-14) to a berth in the Class 5A semifinals. Jones also swiped 24 bases and scored 40 runs. The state's No. 4 prospect in the Class of 2022 as rated by Perfect Game and the 2022 Post Register Player of the Year, he also finished with a 9-0 record on the mound, posting a 1.26 ERA and recording 73 strikeouts in 55.2 innings pitched.

A graduate of the four-year Seminary of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Jones has volunteered locally on behalf of the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl and as part of multiple community service initiatives in association with the National Eagle Scout Association. "Merit Jones was an outstanding player every time he took the field this season," said Tyler Kite, head coach at Rigby High School. "His stats do not lie. He was a competitor and did whatever it took to be successful. He simply played the game of baseball the right way."

Jones has maintained a 4.20 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Utah 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.

Jones joins recent Gatorade Idaho Baseball Players of the Year Jaxon Sorenson (2020-21, Idaho Falls High School), Magnum Hofstetter (2019-20, Twin Falls High School), and Gabe Hughes (2018-19 & 2017-18, Rocky Mountain 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, Jones 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. Jones 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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