

**MCCRACKEN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Jack Bennett** of **McCracken County High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Player of the Year**. Bennett is the first Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from McCracken County 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 Bennett as Kentucky'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, Bennett 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.).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-1, 200-pound senior, primarily a right-handed pitcher and third baseman, had led the Mustangs to a 33-6 record and a berth in the statewide tournament. Through 39 games, Bennett batted .468 with seven home runs and 32 RBI, posting a slugging percentage of .876 en route to a 1.495 OPS along with 38 runs scored. Also a catcher and outfielder, he compiled a 7-1 record on the mound with one save, fanning 72 hitters and walking just 12 in 55.1 innings pitched to post a 0.63 ERA and a 0.813 WHIP.

Bennett has volunteered locally as an umpire for local youth baseball and softball games in addition to serving as a youth basketball referee. He also has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives helping families in need in association with his church. "He's a threat at the plate, he's solid anywhere you put him defensively and he's lights-out on the mound," said Apollo High School head coach Mason Head. "If I had to identify what Jack brings most to his team, I'd have to say confidence. McCracken has a different look about them in contrast to almost any other team I've seen. I think Jack is at the heart of that."

Bennett has maintained a 4.04 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Western Kentucky University.

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.

Bennett joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Players of the Year Daylen Lile (2020-21 & 2019-20, Trinity High School), AJ Hacker (2018-19, Rowan County Senior High School), and Ryan Hawks (2017-18, Warren East 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, Bennett 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. Bennett 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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