

**WINSTON CHURCHILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **Chris Hacopian** of **Winston Churchill High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Maryland Baseball Player of the Year**. Hacopian is the first Gatorade Maryland Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Winston Churchill 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 Hacopian as Maryland'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, Hacopian 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-1, 195-pound junior shortstop and right-handed pitcher led the Bulldogs to a 19-3 record and a trip to the Class 4A state semifinals this past season. Hacopian batted .539 with 12 home runs, a school-record 41 RBIs and 39 runs scored. An individual highpoint came when he blasted a walk-off grand slam when the Bulldogs were down three with two outs in the seventh inning against Wheaton. On the mound, he posted a record of 8-0 with one save along with an ERA of 1.15, striking out 55 batters in 41.2 innings pitched.

Hacopian, along with his teammates, has volunteered locally with Kids in Need during the holidays, buying, wrapping and donating gifts to local families in need. He also has donated his time as a teaching assistant in an Autism Resource Services class at Churchill. "Chris Hacopian is an incredibly hard-worker and everything you look for in a competitor," said Wheaton High School head coach Tom McTighe. "He always strives to improve, and somehow always comes up big in high-pressure moments. As high school coaches, we hope for our best players to come up the biggest in large moments; he has done that time after time for Churchill this year."

Hacopian has maintained a 3.78 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at Wake Forest University beginning in the fall of 2023.

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.

Hacopian joins recent Gatorade Maryland Baseball Players of the Year Peter Heubeck (2020-21, Gilman School), Jack Bulger (2019-20 & 2018-19, DeMatha Catholic High School), and Ryan Archibald (2017-18, John Carroll 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, Hacopian 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. Hacopian 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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