

**NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Sam Kennedy** of **North High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year**. Kennedy is the first Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from North 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 Kennedy as Minnesota'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, Kennedy 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, 220-pound senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop had led the Polars (8-11) to a berth in the sectional tournament at the time of his selection. Kennedy posted a 3-1 record with a 0.64 ERA through 19 games, striking out 48 in 22 innings pitched while surrendering just eight hits and 10 walks. An All-Conference and All-Section honoree, he also batted .520 with five home runs and 14 RBI. He was a Rawlings/Perfect Game Second Team All-Central Region selection and played in both the Prep Baseball Report Futures Game and the Area Code Games.

Kennedy has assisted elderly veterans in his neighborhood and has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving Children. "Sam Kennedy really stands out," said Curt Russell, head coach at Tartan High School. "He's just a complete two-way baseball player who can pretty much do it all. He throws the ball well on the mound and he's the kid you don't want to pitch to."

Kennedy has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Minnesota 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.

Kennedy joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Players of the Year Josh Kingery (2020-21, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City High School), Max Carlson (2019-20, Burnsville High School), Drew Gilbert (2018-19, Stillwater Area High School), and Seth Halvorsen (2017-18, Heritage Christian Academy), 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, Kennedy 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. Kennedy 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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