

**MILLARD SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 **Cam Kozeal** of **Millard South High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Player of the Year**. Kozeal is the second Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Millard South 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 Kozeal as Nebraska'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, Kozeal 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 5-foot-11, 190-pound junior shortstop led the Patriots to a 26-10 record and the Class A state championship game this past season. Kozeal batted .433 with six home runs and 42 RBI, while scoring 38 runs and stealing 18 bases. A Rawlings/Perfect Game Preseason Underclass All-American, he was selected to the Lincoln Journal Star Super-State First Team, the Omaha World-Herald All-Nebraska First Team and was named MVP of the Prep Baseball Report Futures Game.

Kozeal has volunteered locally on behalf of Open Door Mission as well as youth sports programs and his school's Unified Softball team. "Cam Kozeal is the best player in the state," said Jason Shockey, head coach at Bellevue West High School. "He hits for power, he hits for average, he's an outstanding defender and he really loves to play the game."

Kozeal has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Kozeal joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Baseball Players of the Year Drew Christo (2020-21, Elkhorn High School), Max Anderson (2019-20, Millard West High School), Cole Evans (2018-19, Grand Island Senior High School), and Dylan Phillips (2017-18, Creighton Prep), 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, Kozeal 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. Kozeal 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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