

**SOUTH BRUNSWICK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Walker Jenkins** of **South Brunswick High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Player of the Year**. Jenkins is the second Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Brunswick 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 Jenkins as North Carolina'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, Jenkins 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-3, 210-pound junior outfielder had led the Cougars to a 24-3 record and a berth in the Class 3A state championship series at the time of his selection. Jenkins batted .519 with 10 home runs and 37 runs batted in through 27 games. Ranked as the nation's No. 2 recruit in the Class of 2023 by PerfectGame.com, he scored 45 runs and swiped 16 bases entering the state finals, posting a .630 on-base percentage and a 1.086 slugging percentage. A member of the USA Baseball Under-18 National Team, he had not committed an error all season through the state semifinals.

Jenkins has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects and as a youth baseball coach. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Walker is an absolute stud," said Aaron Rimer, head coach of New Hanover High School. "We 100-percent would not throw him a pitch [to hit] with any runners on base. He's an absolute stud defensively as well in center field, covers from gap to gap and made a catch against us that only he makes. He's just a special player."

Jenkins has maintained a weighted 4.52 GPA in the classroom. He has made a verbal commitment to play baseball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Jenkins joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Josh Hartle (2020-21, Reagan High School), Ryan Clifford (2019-20, Leesville Road High School), Blake Walston (2018-19, New Hanover High School), and Owen White (2017-18, Jesse Carson 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, Jenkins 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. Jenkins 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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