

**BAINBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 **J.R. Ritchie** of **Bainbridge High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year**. Ritchie is the first Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bainbridge 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 Ritchie as Washington'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, Ritchie 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 (2006-2007, Seaton Hall Preparatory School, N.J.) and Kris Bryant (2009-10, Bonanza High School, Nev.).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-2, 170-pound senior right-handed pitcher compiled a 7-0 record on the mound with a 0.40 ERA this past season, leading the Spartans to a 19-4 record and the second round of the Class 2A state tournament. Ritchie struck out 74 batters while surrendering just 12 hits and walking only three in 35.1 innings pitched. Ranked as the nation's No. 15 recruit in the Class of 2022 by Baseball America, the two-time Olympic League MVP also batted .468 with four home runs, 26 runs scored, 35 RBI and a .919 slugging percentage.

Ritchie has volunteered locally as a youth baseball coach. "J.R.'s talent certainly shines, but I think what stands out most is his preparation and mentality," said Chris Campbell, head coach of Olympic High School. "He's got a fairly meticulous warmup and he's truly spending the entire pregame getting ready physically [and] mentally to go out and play his best. That mindset continues into the game, where he's locked in and going out to do his job."

Ritchie has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at UCLA this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in July's Major League Baseball draft.

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.

Two-time winner Ritchie joins recent Gatorade Washington Baseball Players of the Year J.R. Malakhi Knight (2019-20, Marysville Getchell High School), Corbin Carroll (2018-19, Lakeside School), and Carter Young (2017-18, Selah 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, Ritchie 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. Ritchie 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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