

**SERVICE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 2, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Coen Niclai** of **Service High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year**. Niclai is the second Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Service 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 Niclai as Alaska'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, Niclai joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Jackson Holliday (2021-22, Stillwater High School, Okla.), Bobby Witt Jr. (2018-19, Colleyville Heritage High School, Texas), Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas) and Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo High School, Mich.).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-2, 210-pound junior catcher had led the Cougars to a 14-5 record and a berth in Alaska's Division I state baseball tournament. Niclai batted .326 with two home runs, 27 RBI and a 1.098 OPS through 19 games and was especially impactful in the Cook Inlet Conference tournament, hitting a grand slam in Service's second round win over Anchorage Wes High School. He also gunned down five runners in that game.

Niclai has volunteered locally on behalf of Service High School's peer mentorship program and as a youth baseball coach and umpire. "Niclai is having a fantastic year and is the most complete player in the state," said Dimond High School head coach John Bruce. "There are (great hitters) this year, but none are as strong on the defensive side of the ball."

Niclai has maintained a 3.63 weighted 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.

Niclai joins recent Gatorade Alaska Baseball Players of the Year Curtis Hebert (2021-22, South Anchorage High School), Dylan Maltby (2020-21, South Anchorage High School), Leland Wilson (2019-20, West Anchorage High School), and Jacob Woodall (2018-19, South Anchorage High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.

###