

**VALLEY VIEW HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARKANSAS 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 **Slade Caldwell** of **Valley View High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year**. Caldwell is the first Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Valley View 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 Caldwell as Arkansas' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Caldwell 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.).

The 5-foot-8, 175-pound junior outfielder and left-handed pitcher led the Blazers to a 27-5 record and the Class 5A state final this past season. Caldwell batted .512 with five home runs, 31 RBI and 54 runs scored, also stealing 40 bases and walking 40 times. Ranked as the nation's No. 10 recruit in the Class of 2024 by Perfect Game, he compiled a .656 on-base percentage and a .930 slugging percentage. On the mound, he went 7-1 with a 2.31 earned run average over 54.1 innings pitched, striking out 72 and walking just 16.

An All-State running back in football and a member of both the National Honor Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes member, Caldwell is also a student council representative in addition to volunteering locally as a youth baseball coach and at a holiday toy drive for underprivileged children. "Slade is a true five-tool guy—he's very intellectual, one of those people that just stands out," said Isaac Dulaney, head coach of Joe T. Robinson High School. "He's got a presence when he steps in the box, he's a guy you don't want to pitch to. Then, he can track balls that are sure doubles in the outfield. When you put him on first, he's at third in two pitches. He does it all, one of those rare people you only get one or two of in your entire coaching career."

Caldwell has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school in the 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.

Caldwell joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Players of the Year Cooper Dossett (2021-22, Har-Ber High School), Jackson Wells (2020-21, Rogers High School), Cayden Wallace (2019-20, Greenbrier High School), and Blake Adams (2018-19, Har-Ber 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.

###