

**MERCER COUNTY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Evan Hart** of **Mercer County Senior High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Player of the Year**. Hart is the first Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Mercer County Senior 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 Hart as Kentucky'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, Hart 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 6-foot-4, 205-pound senior left-handed pitcher, outfielder and first baseman went 7-3 with a 0.76 ERA while striking out 123 batters over 64.1 innings, leading the Titans (25-11) to the regional quarterfinals this past season. Ranked as the state's top prospect in the Class of 2023 by Perfect Game, Hart also batted .344 with four home runs, 30 RBI, 27 runs scored, a .492 on-base percentage and a .583 slugging percentage. He was named the Kentucky High School Baseball Coaches Association 12th region Player of the Year.

Hart has volunteered locally with Upward Sports as well as the Kendyl and Friends Foundation, a nonprofit resource for children with special needs. "Evan's dominant on the mound, confident, throws a ton of strikes and attacks guys," said Josh Loughry, head coach at Danville High School. "He had the leadership skills to take this young Mercer County team and carry them on his back, too. I don't know if anyone this year has been able to do what Evan has done."

Hart has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky 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.

Hart joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Baseball Players of the Year Jack Bennett (2021-22, McCracken County High School), Daylen Lile (2020-21 & 2019-20, Trinity High School), and AJ Hacker (2018-19, Rowan County Senior 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.