

**BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 **Aiden O'Connell** of **Bedford High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade New Hampshire Baseball Player of the Year**. O'Connell is the second Gatorade New Hampshire Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bedford 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 O'Connell as New Hampshire'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, O'Connell 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-3, 200-pound junior left-handed pitcher and first baseman had led the Bulldogs to a 13-7 record and a berth in New Hampshire's Division I state tournament. O'Connell compiled a 6-1 record with a 1.21 ERA through 20 games, striking out 93 batters in 46 innings, the most of any Division I pitcher in the state. He also batted .469 with five home runs, 24 RBI and 24 runs scored, posting a 1.448 OPS.

Also a state champion and 1,000-point scorer in basketball, O'Connell has volunteered locally as a youth basketball instructor. "He has a very good arm and commands all of his pitches," said Nashua High School South head coach James Gaj. "When he pitches, he's the best kid on the field. He also hit a very long triple against us earlier this year, so I know he can swing the stick."

O'Connell has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play baseball on scholarship at Northwestern University in the fall of 2024.

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.

O'Connell joins recent Gatorade New Hampshire Baseball Players of the Year Joe Allen (2021-22, Winnacunnet High School), Cam MacDonald (2020-21, Winnacunnet High School), Connor Hujsak (2019-20, Goffstown High School), and Brett Anderson (2018-19, Bishop Guertin 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.

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