

**SOUTH BRUNSWICK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Walker Jenkins** of **South Brunswick High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Player of the Year**. Jenkins is the second Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Brunswick 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 Jenkins as North Carolina'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, Jenkins 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-3, 215-pound senior outfielder compiled a .417 batting average with 33 runs scored this past season, leading the Cougars (14-10) to the Round of 16 in the Class 3A state tournament. Jenkins walked in 32 of 95 plate appearances while compiling an on-base percentage of .632 and a slugging percentage of .633. Ranked as the nation's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2023 by Perfect Game, he's a member of the USA Baseball Under-18 National Team.

Jenkins has volunteered locally as part of community beautification projects and as a youth baseball coach. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "I have been playing or coaching baseball for 33 years in Wilmington and Walker is definitely one of the top two or three players I've seen over that time," said Ben Stroehl, head coach of Ashley High School. "He is a tremendous competitor and looks like a man among boys."

Jenkins has maintained a weighted 4.57 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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 Jenkins joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Josh Hartle (2020-21, Reagan High School), Ryan Clifford (2019-20, Leesville Road High School), and Blake Walston (2018-19, New Hanover 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.