

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

**CHICAGO** (June 2, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Rilen Niclai of Service High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year**.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Niclai as Alaska's best high school baseball player, and he joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Gary Sheffield (1985-86, Hillsborough High School, Florida), Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas) and Konnor Griffin (2023-24, Jackson Preparatory School, Mississippi).

At the time of his selection, the 6-foot-2, 193-pound junior right-handed pitcher and shortstop had led the Cougars to an 18-4 record and a berth in the upcoming Division I state tournament. Niclai posted a 5-1 record on the mound with a 0.494 ERA, striking out 58 batters while issuing just 10 walks through 28.1 innings. At the plate, he batted .389 with two home runs, 19 RBI and 21 runs scored through 22 games, producing a .493 on-base percentage, .685 slugging percentage and 1.178 OPS. Ranked as the No. 1 player in Alaska in the Class of 2026 by Perfect Game, Niclai was named MVP of the 2024 Legion State Tournament, won a state championship with Service in 2024 and earned All-Tournament honors at the 2025 Buddy Dale Invitational.

Niclai has volunteered locally as a mentor at Uptain Athletics, an athletic training company, and has also donated his time as a local youth baseball instructor. "He's been our top hitter and he's thriving on the mound," said Service High School head coach Willie Paul. "He's been lights out, and he's the cornerstone of our defense at shortstop. He's one of the first truly two-way guys that I've had. He's our ace, our best hitter and he's been up to 93 mph on the mound."

Niclai has maintained a 3.17 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 across 12 different high school sports – 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.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](https://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://x.com/Gatorade).