

SUGAR-SALEM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IDAHO BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (June 3, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Dawson McNelly of Sugar-Salem High School is the 2024-25 Gatorade Idaho 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 McNelly as Idaho'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).

The 6-foot-2, 205-pound senior right-handed pitcher and outfielder led the Diggers (22-4) to the 4A state championship this past season. McNelly batted .558 with 41 RBI and led the state with 14 home runs while scoring 44 runs. He posted a record of 8-0 on the mound with a 0.31 ERA and 69 strikeouts, issuing only 14 walks in 45.2 innings.

McNelly has volunteered locally with his high school government class in a program called Operation Merry Christmas, helping to raise more than \$20,000 for food and gifts to families in need during the holidays. He has also donated his time to help elderly people in his community with yard work through his church youth group. "He's a good pitcher, the best we saw all year," said Burke Deal, head coach at Homedale High School. "He's a gamer."

McNelly has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to play baseball at Utah Tech University 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 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.