

**TAYLOR COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Cole McLean of Taylor County High School is the 2024-25 Gatorade Kentucky 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 McLean as Kentucky'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, 175-pound junior left-handed pitcher and outfielder had led the Cardinals (24-6) to a berth in the regional postseason tournament. McLean compiled a record of 9-0 on the mound with a 0.12 ERA and 119 strikeouts in 57 innings pitched, holding opposing hitters to a .082 batting average through 30 games. The state's No. 3 ranked player in the Class of 2026 by Perfect Game, he also batted .354 with six home runs, 30 runs scored, 22 RBI and a 1.044 OPS.

An active member of the Future Farmers of America, McLean has raised two acres of sweet corn in the summer as part of his Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) project. He has also volunteered locally on behalf of Hometown Connect, delivering meals to those in need, and as a youth baseball coach. "Cole McLean is exactly the kind of player you want leading your team on the field," said Taylor County High School head coach Brandon Gupton. "His mental toughness on the mound combined with his natural ability makes him a threat to any opponent. Most importantly, he has a tremendous work ethic. He puts in much or more time than any of his teammates and encourages them to match his effort to elevate the program and drive success."

McLean has maintained a 3.52 GPA in the classroom. He has verbally committed to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Tennessee beginning in the fall of 2026.

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.