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**SEARCY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ARKANSAS BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 1, 2011) — In its 26th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Dillon Howard of Searcy High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year. Howard is the first Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Searcy 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 Howard as Arkansas' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Howard joins an elite alumni association of past state baseball award winners, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-3, 210-pound senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop posted a 9-2 record on the mound along with a 0.70 ERA, leading the Lions to the Class 6A state final. A 2010 Aflac All-American and the 2010 Connie Mack World Series MVP, Howard struck out 120 batters in 64.2 innings for Searcy this past season while batting .370 with four home runs and 23 RBIs.

Howard has maintained a 3.30 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Future Business Leaders of America, he has volunteered locally on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and is an active member of his church community.

"Dillon Howard is peerless as far as his ability to excel on the field," said Lionel Myers, head coach of rival Wynne High. "We have competed against Searcy for four years and there is no one else like him."

Howard has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Arkansas this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in this month's Major League Baseball First-Year Player 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 ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Howard joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Players of the Year Brandon Moore (2009-10, Van Buren), D.J. Baxendale (2008-09; Sylvan Hills), Tyler Wilson (2007-08, Greenwood), and Scott Sammons (2006-07, Searcy), among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners, and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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