

**WESTERN BRANCH HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® VIRGINIA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 1, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Nick Thompson of Western Branch High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Virginia Baseball Player of the Year. Thompson is the first Gatorade Virginia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Western Branch 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 Thompson as Virginia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Thompson 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-1, 200-pound senior right-handed pitcher finished 7-2 on the mound with a 1.50 ERA this season, leading the Bruins (17-5) to the Class AAA district semifinals. A Virginia High School Coaches Association All-Star Game selection, Thompson recorded 79 strikeouts against just 13 walks in 56 innings. Also a shortstop, he batted .424 along with 23 runs scored, 19 RBI, 10 stolen bases and four home runs. A returning Class AAA First Team All-State selection as named by Virginia Preps, Thompson produced a .695 slugging percentage and .563 on-base percentage. In addition to leading his Hurricanes to the 16U World Wood Bat Championship in the summer of 2009, he produced a .560 batting average and 1.44 ERA as a junior.

Also a swimming standout and a member of the school's orchestra, Thompson has maintained a 4.88 weighted GPA in the classroom, ranks No. 1 in his graduating class and has served on his school's student council. A National Merit Scholarship Finalist and a member of the National Honor Society, he has volunteered locally on behalf of Reading Enriches All Children, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Little League Challenger Division. Thompson has also donated his time as a baseball instructor in association with numerous youth organizations.

"Nicholas has helped raised our program to the next level," said Western Branch High head coach Roland Wright. "Nicholas has not only excelled on the baseball diamond, but has also excelled in the classroom and the community. Nicholas represents our program in a positive manner daily."

Thompson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at East Carolina 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 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.

Thompson joins recent Gatorade Virginia Baseball Players of the Year Kyle Crockett (2009-10, Poquoson), Ethan Carter (2008-09; Menchville), Austin Stadler (2007-08, James River), and Neil Ramirez (2006-07, Kempsville), 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).