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**HURRICANE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Tyler Payne of Hurricane High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year. Payne is the fourth Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hurricane 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 Payne as West Virginia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in June, Payne 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 5-foot-11, 200-pound senior catcher batted .571 along with 49 RBI, 37 runs scored and a school-record 14 home runs this season, leading the Redskins (25-6) to the Class AAA regional semifinals. A returning Class AAA Second Team All-State selection as named by the West Virginia Sports Writers Association, Payne produced a 1.071 slugging percentage and .633 on-base percentage. He finished with a .451 batting average, 37 RBI and four home runs as a junior.

Payne has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Science National Honor Society, he has donated his time as a youth baseball instructor.

"He is an absolute winner," said Hurricane High head coach Brian Sutphin. "He's a first-class person and player. His character is off the charts."

Payne has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at West Virginia State 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.

Payne joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Players of the Year J.R. Bradley (2009-10, Nitro), Corey Miller (2008-09; Cabell Midland), Chase Pickering (2007-08, Nitro), and Patrick Arnold (2006-07, Huntington), 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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