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**BARBE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® LOUISIANA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2012) — In its 27th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Gavin Cecchini of Barbe High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Player of the Year. Cecchini is the third Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Barbe 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 Cecchini as Louisiana's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Cecchini 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-2, 185-pound senior shortstop led the Buccaneers (33-6) to the Class 5A state championship this past season. Playing under mandatory wood-bat rules, Cecchini hit .413 with seven home runs, 32 RBIs, 43 runs and 32 stolen bases. The 2010-11 Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Player of the Year, he was named MVP of the 2011 Under Armour All-American Game played at Wrigley Field last summer.

Cecchini has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally preparing meals for needy families at Thanksgiving, assisting the elderly vacate an area nursing home during a mandatory hurricane evacuation and collecting baseball equipment for orphans in Guatemala.

"There's literally nothing Gavin Cecchini doesn't do well on a baseball field," said Jesse Cassard, head coach at Zachary High. "I've seen a lot of players over the years, but never anyone like him. Everything comes so easy to him. His arm strength and footwork are so much better than everyone else. He's the best high school player I've ever seen."

Cecchini has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Mississippi this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in next 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 ESPNHS 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.

Two-time winner Cecchini joins Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Players of the Year Bronson Gillam (2009-10, Evangel Christian Academy), Zachary Von Rosenberg (2008-09; Zachary), Austin Nola (2007-08, Catholic), and Carmen Angelini (2006-07, Barbe), 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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