

**Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)**

**JAMES RIVER HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® VIRGINIA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2012) — In its 27<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPNHS, today announced Nathan Kirby of James River High School as its 2011-12 Gatorade Virginia Baseball Player of the Year. Kirby is the second Gatorade Virginia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from James River 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 Kirby as Virginia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Kirby 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, 180-pound senior left-handed pitcher led the Rapids to a 17-6 record entering the Group AAA Central Region semifinals, scheduled for May 30. A Preseason Second Team All-American as named by Perfect Game USA, Kirby owned an 8-1 record with a 1.39 ERA and 75 strikeouts in 50 innings pitched through 23 games. Also a first baseman, Kirby batted .434 with two home runs and 15 RBI. He produced a .642 slugging percentage and .474 on-base percentage.

Kirby has maintained a 3.43 GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time at the local hospital's pediatric ward and as a youth baseball instructor, he has volunteered on behalf of the Special Olympics, Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation for cancer research, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and as part of Military Appreciation Day.

"He has been everything for us this year," said James River head coach Pete Schumacher. "He has traditionally been a dominant pitcher, but this year he's started at first base whenever he hasn't pitched and has the second-highest batting average on our team. He's been the ultimate leader. He's only given up earned runs in three games. He's got three pitches that he throws for strikes, and has been exceptional this year."

Kirby has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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 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.

Kirby joins recent Gatorade Virginia Baseball Players of the Year Nick Thompson (2010-11, Western Branch High School), 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).

###