

Contact: Ashley Ginascol (312-729-3622)

**HARRISBURG HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ILLINOIS BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 28, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Ryne Roper of Harrisburg High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Illinois Baseball Player of the Year. Roper is the first Gatorade Illinois Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrisburg 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 Roper as Illinois's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Roper joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, 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.), Derrek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-2, 185-pound senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop led the Bulldogs to a 30-5 record and the sectional semifinals this past season. Roper posted an 11-0 record and a 0.51 ERA on the mound, and a .450 batting average with nine home runs and 40 RBI at the plate. He had 106 strikeouts in 68 innings-pitched, with just 29 hits and eight walks allowed. Roper is a three-time All-Conference honoree and was a Rawlings/Perfect Game Preseason High School Second Team All-Central Region selection.

Roper has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of a community garden.

"Roper does everything well and he plays hard," said Brett Blondi, head coach at Benton High. "He has tremendous command of the strike zone with three pitches. He has a good fastball with a downward angle that he places well, and a sharp breaking pitch that he can throw for a strike at any point in the count."

Roper has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Illinois 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 the Gatorade high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Roper joins recent Gatorade Illinois Baseball Players of the Year Kyle Funkhouser (2011-12, Oak Forest High School), Charlie Tilson (2010 - 11, New Trier Township High School), Jake DePew (2009-10, Granite City), Kevin Koziol (2008-09 Brother Rice), Jake Odorizzi (2007-08, Highland), and Jake Smolinski (2006-2007, Boylan Catholic) 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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