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**HICKMAN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® MISSOURI 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 Colby Fitch of Hickman High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Missouri Baseball Player of the Year. Fitch is the second Gatorade Missouri Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Hickman 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 Fitch as Missouri's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Fitch 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 5-foot-11, 205-pound junior catcher and outfielder batted .500 with five home runs, 25 runs scored, 22 RBI and a .960 slugging percentage, leading the Kewpies (15-7) to the Class 5 district semifinals this past season. A 2012 and 2013 Under Armour Pre-season All-American, Fitch threw out 12-of-15 base runners this season.

Fitch has maintained a 3.78 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has served on his school's student council and has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank and as part of multiple community clean-up initiatives.

"I have had the privilege of coaching against Colby Fitch and watching his growth as a player," said Justin Towe, head coach at Rock Bridge High. "He is unquestionably one of the most respected players in the state of Missouri. He never backs down from a challenge and he is always willing to put in the extra effort required to be successful."

Fitch has verbally committed to play baseball on an athletic scholarship at the University of Louisville beginning in the fall of 2014.

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.

Fitch joins recent Gatorade Missouri Baseball Players of the Year Blake McFadden (2011-12, Savannah High School), Brett Graves (2010 - 11, Francis Howell High School), Chuckie Jones (2009-10, Boonville), Jacob Turner (2008-09 Westminster Christian Academy), Tim Melville (2007-08, Holt), and Nicholas Tepesch (2006-2007, Blue Springs) 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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