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**LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Nick Ciuffo of Lexington High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year. Ciuffo is the first Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lexington 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 Ciuffo as South Carolina's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Ciuffo 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-1, 205-pound senior catcher led the Wildcats (28-5) to the Class AAAA state championship this past season. Ciuffo batted .468 with five home runs, 33 RBIs and a .723 slugging percentage. A 2012 Under Armour All-American and a 2013 Rawlings Preseason All-American, he is ranked No. 12 in the nation by Perfect Game USA and No. 14 by MaxPreps.com

Ciuffo has maintained a 3.31 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally as an elementary school student mentor, as a youth baseball coach and camp counselor and on behalf of multiple charity fundraiser initiatives.

"Nick Ciuffo is the best high school baseball player I have ever coached," said Lexington High head coach Brian Hucks. "He is a natural born leader and his make-up is off the charts. He is a winner and has always placed importance on team success rather than his own."

Ciuffo has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on an athletic scholarship at the University of South Carolina 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 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.

Ciuffo joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Jamie Callahan (2011-12, Dillon High School), Jordan Montgomery (2010 - 11, Sumter High School), Forrest Koumas (2009-10, Lugoff-Elgin), Madison Younginer (2008-09 Mauldin), Zac Fuesser (2007-08, York Comprehensive), and Steven Neff (2006-2007, Lancaster) 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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