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**ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Luke Salerno of Essex High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Vermont Baseball Player of the Year. Salerno is the third Gatorade Vermont Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Essex 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 Salerno as Vermont's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award announced in May, Salerno 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, 185-pound senior right-handed pitcher and outfielder had led the Hornets to a 10-2 record at the time of his selection. Through 12 games, Salerno owned a 4-1 record with a 0.80 ERA on the mound, with a .368 batting average and 10 RBI at the plate. He has posted 38 strikeouts against just nine walks in 35 innings-pitched. Salerno was an Honorable Mention All-Metro selection as a junior.

Salerno has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of youth baseball and basketball programs.

"Salerno's a very good pitcher," said Tim Albertson, head coach at Champlain Valley Union High. "He throws two or three pitches well and mixes them up nicely. At the plate, he has a good eye and he can hit for power."

Salerno will attend Castleton State College this fall, where he will play baseball.

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.

Salerno joins recent Gatorade Vermont Baseball Players of the Year Cody Sharrow (2011-12, Mt. Mansfield Union High School), Nick Swim (2010 - 11, Bellows Free Academy), Adam Picard (2009-10, Essex), Ryan Carter (2008-09 Proctor), Greg Lutton (2007-08, Mt. Abraham Union), and Casey Harman (2006-2007, South Burlington) 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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