

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**PLANT HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® FLORIDA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 28, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Kyle Tucker of Plant High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Florida Baseball Player of the Year. Tucker is the first Gatorade Florida Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Plant 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 Tucker as Florida's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Tucker 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.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and Jon Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-5, 195-pound senior outfielder batted .484 with 10 home runs, 27 RBI and 29 runs-scored this past season, leading the Panthers (16-8) to the Class 8A district quarterfinals. An Under Armour All-America Game and Perfect Game All-American Classic selection, Tucker worked 25 walks, stole 10 bases and belted seven doubles in just 64 official at-bats, recording a .581 on-base percentage and .962 slugging percentage. Also a right-handed relief pitcher, he finished with four saves, a 1.75 ERA and 12 strikeouts over 12 innings in eight appearances.

Tucker has maintained a 5.33 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth baseball instructor, he has volunteered locally at the Humane Society of Tampa Bay, on behalf of children battling cancer at Tampa General Hospital as well as Sertoma International, an empowerment organization supporting those at risk for or suffering from hearing loss.

"I have been a huge believer in Kyle since the first time I saw him play," said Kristopher Wilken, head coach of rival Bloomingdale High. "I've been coaching for a long time and haven't seen a hitter as pure as he is and probably won't again for a long time. He's a pretty special player."

Tucker has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Florida this fall but is projected as a first-round selection in June's Major League Baseball 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.

Tucker joins recent Gatorade Florida Baseball Players of the Year Nicholas Gordon (2013-14 & 2012-13, Olympia High School), Lance McCullers, Jr. (2011-12, Jesuit High School), Jose Fernandez (2010-11, Alonso High School), Nick Castellanos (2009-10, Archbishop McCarthy High School), Bobby Borcherling (2008-09, Bishop Verot Catholic High School), Eric Hosmer (2007-08, American Heritage School), and Michael Main (2006-07, DeLand High School) 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.

###