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**GATORADE® NATIONAL BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:
LUKEN BAKER**

Former Three-time MLB All-Star Surprises Standout with Elite Honor

Conroe, Texas (June 2, 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 Luken Baker of Oak Ridge High School (Conroe, Texas) as its 2014-15 Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year. Baker was surprised with the news at school by former three-time MLB All-Star Roy Oswalt.

“It felt great to surprise Luken with the Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award and welcome him into one of the most prestigious legacy programs in high school sports,” Oswalt said. “Gatorade has been on the sidelines fueling athletic performance for years, so to be recognized by a brand that understands the game and truly helps athletes perform is a huge honor for these kids.”

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 Baker as the nation’s best high school baseball player. A national advisory panel comprised of sport-specific experts and sports journalists helped select Baker from more than 470,000 high school baseball players nationwide. Baker is now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade Male High School Athlete of the Year award, to be presented at a special ceremony prior to The ESPY Awards in July.

The 6-foot-5, 255-pound senior right-handed pitcher and first baseman has led the War Eagles to a 29-2 record and the Class 6A Regional Final, scheduled for June 6. Baker owns a 12-0 record with a 1.02 ERA and 120 strikeouts in 82 innings-pitched. Offensively, he’s batting .448 with eight home runs and a .632 on-base percentage through 31 games. A 2015 Perfect Game All-American and a 2014 Under Armour All-American, Baker was a member of USA Baseball’s 18U National Team that won a third consecutive gold medal after compiling a 12-0 record at the 2014 Pan American Championship in Mexico last summer. He batted .500 (19-for-38) in the tournament with three home runs, 15 RBI and a .565 on-base percentage. He also contributed on the mound with 2.1 hitless innings for Team USA, including four strikeouts.

Baker has maintained a 3.75 GPA in the classroom. A member of the youth group at Christ Church United Methodist, he has donated his time to The Woodlands Children’s Festival. He has also volunteered in association with the Special Olympics and serves as a peer mentor on behalf of Oak Ridge High’s Safe School Ambassadors Club.

"Luken Baker is a very talented and intriguing two-way player," said Jim Callis, Senior Writer for MLB Pipeline at MLB.com. "He'll likely be drafted in the first two rounds in June as a pitcher, which makes sense because he can hit 95 mph with his fastball and back it up with a hard slider. However, he has as much raw power as anyone in this draft as well. With his size, strength and bat speed, he can hit balls to places that only a few hitters can even dream of."

Baker has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Texas Christian University this fall, but is projected as an early round selection in June's Major League Baseball draft.

"Luken embodies everything we look for in a Gatorade Player of the Year recipient," said Gatorade Chief Marketing Officer Morgan Flatley. "In addition to being one of the best high school baseball players in the country, Luken has excelled in the classroom and been a positive influence in his community. He is a role model for younger student-athletes to look up to and we are excited to see all the things he will accomplish in the future."

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.

Former notable Gatorade National Players of the Year include:

- Super Bowl Most Valuable Player Peyton Manning
- WNBA all-time leading scorer and rebounder Lisa Leslie
- NFL all-time leading rusher Emmitt Smith
- Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh
- Four-time track & field gold medalist Allyson Felix

For more information on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of former winners, and future announcement dates, visit the Gatorade Player of the Year Web site at

<http://www.gatorade.com/poy>, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

ALL-TIME GATORADE NATIONAL BASEBALL PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

YEAR	NAME	HIGH SCHOOL	STATUS
2014-15	Luken Baker	Oak Ridge/Conroe, TX	High School Senior
2013-14	Justus Sheffield	Tullahoma/Tullahoma, TN	Cleveland Indians Org.
2012-13	Clint Frazier	Loganville/Loganville, GA	Cleveland Indians Org.
2011-12	Lance McCullers	Jesuit/Tampa, FL	Houston Astros Org.
2010-11	Dylan Bundy	Owasso/Owasso, OK	Baltimore Orioles
2009-10	Kaleb Cowart	Cook/Adel, GA	Los Angeles Angels Org.
2008-09	Matt Hobgood	Norco/Norco, CA	Baltimore Orioles Org.
2007-08	Kyle Skipworth	Patriot/Riverside, CA	Miami Marlins
2006-07	Rick Porcello	Seton Hall Prep/West Orange, NJ	Boston Red Sox
2005-06	Clayton Kershaw	Highland Park/Dallas, TX	Los Angeles Dodgers
2004-05	Justin Upton	Great Bridge/Chesapeake, VA	San Diego Padres
2003-04	Mark Rogers	Mt. Ararat/Topsham, Maine	Univ. of Pennsylvania Student
2002-03	Chris Lubanski	Kennedy-Kenrick Catholic/Norristown, PA	Retired from MLB
2001-02	Zack Greinke	Apopka/Apopka, FL	Los Angeles Dodgers
2000-01	Casey Kotchman	Seminole/Seminole, FL	Retired from MLB
1999-00	Jason Stokes	Coppell/Coppell, TX	Retired from MLB
1998-99	B.J. Garbe	Moses Lake/Moses Lake, WA	Retired from MLB
1997-98	Drew Henson	Brighton/Brighton, MI	Retired from NFL and MLB
1996-97	Darnell McDonald	Cherry Creek/Englewood, CO	Retired from MLB
1995-96	Matt White	Waynesboro/Waynesboro, PA	Retired from MLB
1994-95	Chad Hutchinson	Torrey Pines/San Diego, CA	Retired from NFL and MLB
1993-94	Doug Million	Sarasota/Sarasota, FL	Deceased
1992-93	Alex Rodriguez	Westminster Christian/Miami, FL	New York Yankees
1991-92	A.J. Hinch	Midwest City/Midwest City, OK	Houston Astros Manager
1990-91	Brian Barber	Dr. Phillips/Orlando, FL	Retired from MLB
1989-90	Todd VanPoppel	James Martin/Arlington, TX	Retired from MLB
1988-89	Jeff Jackson	Simeon/Chicago, IL	Retired from MLB
1987-88	Mark Lewis	Hamilton/Hamilton, OH	Retired from MLB
1986-87	Willie Banks	St. Anthony's/Jersey City, NJ	Retired from MLB
1985-86	Gary Sheffield	Hillsborough/Tampa, FL	Retired from MLB

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