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**FLORENCE HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® ALABAMA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 24, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Braxton Garrett of Florence High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year. Garrett is the first Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Florence 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 Garrett as Alabama's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Garrett 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 John Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-3, 195-pound senior left-handed pitcher compiled a 6-2 record with a 0.54 ERA and recorded 131 strikeouts against just 15 walks in 65.1 innings pitched this past season, leading the Falcons (31-17) to a berth in the Class 6A state tournament. Also a centerfielder and first baseman, he batted .394 with 10 doubles and 34 RBI. An American Family Insurance ALL-USA Preseason Baseball Team selection as named by USA TODAY, he worked 15 walks and belted 13 extra-base hits, posting a .459 on-base percentage and .503 slugging percentage. The Alabama Sports Writers Association's returning Mr. Baseball, he was a member of the USA Baseball 18U National Team that won the 2015 18U Baseball World Cup this past summer.

Garrett has maintained a 3.69 weighted GPA in the classroom. In addition to donating his time as a youth baseball instructor and by serving in his school's special needs classroom, Garrett has volunteered on behalf of his church, the Sav-A-Life organization and the Junior League. He has also participated in a local food drive for underprivileged children.

"Not only is he the best high school pitcher that I have ever seen, but he plays the game so hard and with passion, yet with great character," said Scott Mitchell, head coach at rival Rogers High. "He is a rare player."

Garrett has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University this fall, but is projected as an early 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.

Garrett joins recent Gatorade Alabama Baseball Players of the Year Hunter Stovall (2014-15, Pelham High School), Cody Reed (2013-14, Ardmore High School), Keegan Thompson (2012-13 & 2010-11, Cullman High School), Mikey White (2011-12, Spain Park High School), Daryl Norris (2009-10, Fairhope High School), Luke Bole (2008-09, Hartselle High School), Tyler Stovall (2007-08, Hokes Bluff High School), and Hunter Morris (2006-07, Grissom 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.

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