

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3622)**

**PRIOR LAKE HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE® MINNESOTA 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 Nick Hanson of Prior Lake High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year. Hanson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Prior Lake 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 Hanson as Minnesota's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Hanson 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-6, 210-pound senior right-handed pitcher and infielder had led the Lakers to a 10-5 record at the time of his selection. Hanson owned a 5-0 record with a 0.68 ERA through 15 games, along with a .417 batting average. An All-Conference and All-Metro honoree as a junior, he struck out 50 batters and scattered 19 hits over 30.2 innings pitched. Hanson was also named to the USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA Minnesota First Team.

Hanson has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of Never Ever Give Up, which assists children stricken with cancer.

"Hanson is a dominant pitcher," said Rob Walsh, head coach at Eagan High. "I think he topped out at 95 MPH and he's got a changeup that he can throw for strikes. He's big and very athletic, and he can swing the bat too."

Hanson has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Kentucky this fall.

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.

Hanson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Players of the Year Eduardo Estrada (2014-15, Litchfield High School), Sam Hentges (2013-14, Mounds View High School), Logan Shore (2012-13, Coon Rapids High School), Mitch Brown (2011-12, Century High School), Rob Youngdahl (2010-11, Hill-Murray School), Chris Anderson (2009-10, Centennial High School), Ryan Abrahamson (2008-09, Tartan High School), Brad Hand (2007-08, Chaska High School), and Mike Kvasnicka (2006-07, Lakeville North 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###