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**BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® VERMONT 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 Mark Connor of Bellows Free Academy as its 2015-16 Gatorade Vermont Baseball Player of the Year. Connor is the first Gatorade Vermont Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bellows Free Academy.

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 Connor as Vermont's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Connor 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-1, 185-pound senior right-handed pitcher and third baseman had led the Bobwhites to an 11-1 record at the time of his selection. Connor owned a 6-1 record with a 0.82 ERA through 12 games, along with a .548 batting average and 20 RBI. A Second Team All-Metro selection as a junior, he struck out 49 with just 14 hits and five walks allowed in 34.1 innings pitched.

Connor has maintained a 3.38 GPA in the classroom. He has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and youth sports programs.

"Connor throws as hard as anybody we've seen this year and he has excellent control," said Jeff Stetson, head coach at Mt. Abraham Union High. "He hits his spots and has a very good idea of how to pitch. He's really hit the ball well too."

Connor will attend Clarkson University 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.

Connor joins recent Gatorade Vermont Baseball Players of the Year Rayne Supple (2014-15 & 2013-14, Champlain Valley Union High School), Luke Salerno (2012-13, Essex High School), Cody Sharrow (2011-12, Mt. Mansfield Union High School), Nick Swim (2010-11, Bellows Free Academy), Adam Picard (2009-10, Essex High School), Ryan Carter (2008-09, Proctor High School), Greg Lutton (2007-08, Mt. Abraham Union High School), and Casey Harman (2006-07, South Burlington 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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