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**JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® WEST VIRGINIA 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 Paul Witt of Jefferson High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year. Witt is the fifth Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jefferson 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 Witt as West Virginia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Witt 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, 175-pound senior shortstop had led the Cougars to a 31-3 record and a berth in the Region 2 Tournament at the time of his selection. Witt owned a .510 batting average with 31 RBI, 51 runs scored and a .586 on-base percentage through 34 games. A First Team All-State selection, he was also named to the USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA West Virginia Second Team.

Witt has maintained a 3.19 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of his church community, he has volunteered locally on behalf of youth baseball programs.

"Witt is one of the most polished high school baseball players I've seen," said Dirk Webb, Hedgesville High head coach. "He's consistent and far above average offensively. He has some of the best technique, softest hands and overall baseball IQ that I've seen at the high school level."

Witt has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Virginia Commonwealth University 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.

Witt joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Players of the Year Zach Minnick (2014-15, Logan High School), Seth Kinker (2013-14, Cabell Midland High School), Corey Bird (2012-13, Herbert Hoover High School), Korey Dunbar (2011-12, Nitro High School), Tyler Payne (2010-11, Hurricane High School), J.R. Bradley (2009-10, Nitro High School), Corey Miller (2008-09, Cabell Midland High School), Chase Pickering (2007-08, Nitro High School), and Patrick Arnold (2006-07, Huntington 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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