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**DECATUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALABAMA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Tanner Burns of Decatur High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year. Burns is the first Gatorade Alabama Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Decatur 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 Burns as Alabama's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Burns joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo High School, Mich.), Jon Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Preparatory School, Wash.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman High School, Tenn.), Clayton Kershaw (2005-06, Highland Park High School, Texas), Rick Porcello (2006-2007, Seaton Hall Preparatory School, N.J.) and Kris Bryant (2009-10, Bonanza High School, Nev.).

The 6-foot-2, 208-pound senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop posted a 10-1 record with a 0.88 ERA and 116 strikeouts in 64 innings this past season, leading the Red Raiders to a 30-6 record and the Class 6A quarterfinals. Ranked as the nation's No. 31 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Perfect Game, he also batted .467 with 16 home runs, 46 RBI and 55 runs scored.

Burns has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and as a youth baseball coach. "Tanner Burns is an absolutely fierce competitor on the mound and at the plate," said Tyler Stephenson, head coach at Austin High. "He has found so many ways to beat me and every other team I have watched him compete against. As a cross town area rival, he is the kid we hate to see. But off the field I absolutely love the kid. Tanner Burns is an amazingly respectful and humble young man."

Burns has maintained a 3.27 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Auburn 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 Player of the Year Selection Committee, 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.

Burns joins recent Gatorade Alabama Baseball Players of the Year Braxton Garrett (2015-16, Florence High School), 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.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Tanner will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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.