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**SOUTH ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA 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 Jonny Homza of South Anchorage High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year. Homza is the first Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from South Anchorage 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 Homza as Alaska's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Homza 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, 190-pound senior infielder and right-handed pitcher had led the Wolverines to a 13-1 record and a berth in the state tournament at the time of his selection. Homza batted .560 with 28 runs scored, 19 stolen bases and 14 RBI through 14 games. The state's returning Gatorade Baseball Player of the Year, he also posted a 3-0 record on the mound with a 1.15 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 15 innings.

Homza has volunteered locally on behalf of Standing Together Against Rape, and as a youth baseball coach. "Jonny Homza is probably the best all-around player and most competitive player that I have ever coached," said South Anchorage head coach Taylor Nerland. "As a coach, I could tell him to play any position and he would automatically be one of the best guys on the team at that position within a couple reps."

Homza has maintained a 3.59 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Hawaii 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 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.

Two-time winner Homza joins Gatorade Alaska Baseball Players of the Year Nathan Bonck (2014-15, Ketchikan High School), Scooter Bynum (2013-14, Monroe Catholic High School), Erickson Fish (2012-13, Sitka High School), Zach Ferntheil (2011-12, Service High School), Adam Manzer (2010-11, West Anchorage High School), Dylan Baker (2009-10, Juneau-Douglas High School), Ross Venneberg (2008-09, Sitka High School), Joe Kohan (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas High School), and Ryan Skillern (2006-07, South High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jonny 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.

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