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LONOKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS 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 Casey Martin of Lonoke High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year. Martin is the first Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Lonoke 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 Martin as Arkansas's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Martin 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 5-foot-11, 175-pound senior shortstop and right-handed pitcher batted .628 with seven home runs, 29 RBI and 48 runs scored this past season, leading the Jackrabbits to a 21-13 record and the Class 4A quarterfinals. Ranked as the state's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Prep Baseball Report, he also posted a 5-1 record on the mound, recording a 1.50 ERA and 29 strikeouts in 22.2 innings.

Martin has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group and in association with a local charity road race. "Without a doubt, Casey Martin is the best player in the state of Arkansas," said Rusty Passini, head coach at Little Rock Central. "He is probably the best position player to come out of the state in the last 10 years. He can completely take over a high school baseball game and his teammates feed off of his energy and production."

Martin has maintained a 3.18 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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.

Martin joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Players of the Year Evan Lee (2015-16, Bryant High School), Andy Pagnozzi (2014-15, Fayetteville High School), Trevor Ezell (2013-14, Bryant High School), Carson Shaddy (2012-13, Fayetteville High School), Trey Killian (2011-12, Mountain Home High School), Dillon Howard (2010-11, Searcy High School), Brandon Moore (2009-10, Van Buren High School), D.J. Baxendale (2008-09, Sylvan Hills High School), Tyler Wilson (2007-08, Greenwood High School), and Scott Sammons (2006-07, Searcy High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Casey 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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