

Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3622)

**JSERRA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA 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 Royce Lewis of JSerra Catholic High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade California Baseball Player of the Year. Lewis is the first Gatorade California Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from JSerra Catholic 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 Lewis as California's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Lewis 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, 190-pound senior shortstop batted .377 with four home runs, 32 runs scored and 25 stolen bases this past season, leading the Lions (17-13) to the first round of the CIF Southern Section Division I state tournament. Ranked as the nation's No. 3 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Perfect Game and No. 5 by Baseball America, Lewis was a member of the USA Baseball's 18U National Team that won gold at the COPABE Pan American Championships in Mexico last summer.

Lewis has volunteered locally on behalf of Rady's Children's Hospital in San Diego, the Ronald McDonald House Charities and at a homeless shelter. "Royce Lewis is the best player I have seen at the high school level," said Shawn Gilbert, head coach at Servite High. "He is a legit five-tool guy that will be or should be taken in the first couple picks of the draft. One of the things that stands out is he plays the game right. He plays hard and looks like he loves to play."

Lewis has maintained a 3.10 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of California-Irvine 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.

Lewis joins recent Gatorade California Baseball Players of the Year Mickey Moniak (2015-16, La Costa Canyon High School), Joe DeMers (2014-15, College Park High School), Jack Flaherty (2013-14, Harvard-Westlake School), Carlos Salazar (2012-13, Kerman High School), Ty Moore (2011-12, Mater Dei High School), Robert Stephenson (2010-11, Alhambra High School), Dylan Covey (2009-10, Maranatha), Matt Hobgood (2008-09, Norco High School), Kyle Skipworth (2007-08, Patriot High School), and Josh Vitters (2006-07, Cypress High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Royce 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.

###