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**ETOWAH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Drew Waters of Etowah High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year. Waters is the first Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Etowah 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 Waters as Georgia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Waters 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, 192-pound senior outfielder had led the Eagles to a 26-16 record and a berth in the Class AAAAAAA state tournament at the time of his selection. Waters batted .494 with 13 home runs, 35 RBI and 43 runs scored through 42 games, while producing a slugging percentage of 1.126. He is ranked as the nation's No. 11 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Perfect Game and No. 33 by Baseball America.

Waters has volunteered locally on behalf of the Goshen Valley Boys Ranch, the Never Alone Food & Clothing Outreach Center and helped raise more than \$12,000 for a family whose son had suffered a brain tumor. "I have spoken with Drew Waters multiple times and coached against him over the course of his career at Etowah and he is a special young man," said Russ Bayer, head coach at South Forsyth High. "Athletically, I feel he is the most dynamic player in Georgia this year. The things he's able to do on the bases, in the outfield and of course from both sides of the plate, well, he's exceptional."

Waters has maintained a 92.1 average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Georgia 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.

Waters joins recent Gatorade Georgia Baseball Players of the Year Josh Lowe (2015-16, Pope High School), Dazmon Cameron (2014-15, Eagle's Landing Christian Academy), Michael Chavis (2013-14, Sprayberry High School), Clint Frazier (2012-13, Loganville High School), Byron Buxton (2011-12, Appling County High School), Matt Olson (2010-11, Parkview High School), Kaleb Cowart (2009-10, Cook High School), Zach Wheeler (2008-09, East Paulding High School), Ethan Martin (2007-08, Stephens County High School), and Josh Smoker (2006-07, Calhoun High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Drew 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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