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**WEST MONROE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 Jacob Pearson of West Monroe High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Player of the Year. Pearson is the second Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Monroe 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 Pearson as Louisiana's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Pearson 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, 195-pound senior outfielder batted .519 with 12 home runs, 41 RBI and 53 runs scored this past season, leading the Rebels to a 38-3 record and the Class 5A state final. A three-time First Team All-State selection, Pearson produced a .606 on-base percentage and stole 20 bases in 23 attempts.

A member of the National Honor Society and the Student Council, Pearson has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics and the Salvation Army. "Jacob Pearson is the most electric player I've ever coached in my 33-year career, including 20 years in Division 1 College baseball," said West Monroe head coach Wade Simoneaux. "His combination of power and speed make him very attractive to professional scouts. They absolutely love the way he plays the game."

Pearson has maintained a 3.71 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Louisiana State 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.

Pearson joins recent Gatorade Louisiana Baseball Players of the Year Logan Savoy (2015-16, South Beaufort High School), Kale Breaux (2014-15, Sulphur High School), Chase Vallot (2013-14, St. Thomas More High School), Jared Poche (2012-13, Litchfield High School), Gavin Cecchini (2011-12 & 2010-11, Barbe High School), Bronson Gillam (2009-10, Evangel Christian Academy), Zachary Von Rosenberg (2008-09, Zachary High School), Austin Nola (2007-08, Catholic High School), and Carmen Angelini (2006-07, Barbe High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jacob 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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