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**BURNSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Sam Carlson of Burnsville High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year. Carlson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Burnsville 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 Carlson as Minnesota's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Carlson 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-4, 205-pound senior right-handed pitcher and outfielder had led the Blaze to a 14-5 record at the time of his selection. Carlson owned a 3-1 record with a 0.41 ERA on the mound through 19 games, along with posting a .532 batting average including four home runs and 16 RBI. A First Team All-State honoree, he is also a Rawlings/Perfect Game First Team All-American and was selected to USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA Minnesota First Team.

Carlson has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving Children, youth baseball clinics and Never Ever Give Up, which assists children stricken with cancer. "Not only is Carlson a great pitcher, but I've been very impressed with his batting as well," said Chris Swansson, head coach at Rosemount High. "He's a hard worker and a good kid, and he's been impressive every time we've faced him."

Carlson has maintained a 3.61 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Florida 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.

Carlson joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Baseball Players of the Year Nick Hanson (2015-16, Prior Lake High School), Eduardo Estrada (2014-15, Litchfield High School), Sam Hentges (2013-14, Mounds View High School), Logan Shore (2012-13, Coon Rapids High School), Mitch Brown (2011-12, Century High School), Rob Youngdahl (2010-11, Hill-Murray School), Chris Anderson (2009-10, Centennial High School), Ryan Abrahamson (2008-09, Tartan High School), Brad Hand (2007-08, Chaska High School), and Mike Kvasnicka (2006-07, Lakeville North High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Sam 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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