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**JEFFERSON CITY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Grant Wood of Jefferson City High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Missouri Baseball Player of the Year. Wood is the third Gatorade Missouri Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Jefferson City 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 Wood as Missouri's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Wood 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-10, 190-pound senior shortstop and right-handed pitcher had led the Jays to a 27-2 record and a berth in the Class 5 state tournament at the time of his selection. Wood batted .495 with three home runs, 28 RBI and a .791 slugging percentage through 29 games. A 2016 First Team All-State selection, he also posted an 8-0 record on the mound with a 1.64 ERA, holding opposing hitters to a .173 batting average.

Wood has volunteered locally on behalf of the Special Olympics, the Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries International and the Lions Clubs International. "Grant Wood is the best player in our district, which may be the best in the state this year," said Justin Towe, head coach at Rock Bridge High. "This is even more true when you put in his pitching stats along with his position player stats. We have played several of the bigger more successful schools in the state this year and I haven't seen a better player yet than him.

Wood has maintained a 3.88 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Murray State University 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.

Wood joins recent Gatorade Missouri Baseball Players of the Year Jake Matheny (2015-16, Westminster Christian Academy), Jeremy Eierman (2014-15, Warsaw High School), Alex Lange (2013-14, Lee's Summit West High School), Colby Fitch (2012-13, Hickman High School), Blake McFadden (2011-12, Savannah High School), Brett Graves (2010-11, Francis Howell High School), Chuckie Jones (2009-10, Boonville High School), Jacob Turner (2008-09, Westminster Christian Academy), Tim Melville (2007-08, Holt High School), and Nicholas Tepesch (2006-07, Blue Springs High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Grant 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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