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**GREATER LATROBE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Zach Kokoska of Greater Latrobe Senior High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Pennsylvania Baseball Player of the Year. Kokoska is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Greater Latrobe Senior 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 Kokoska as Pennsylvania's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Kokoska 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 outfielder and left-handed pitcher had led the Wildcats to a 17-2 record and a berth in the Class 5A state tournament at the time of his selection. Kokoska batted .623 with four home runs, 25 RBI and a .943 slugging percentage through 19 games. Ranked as the state's No. 9 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Prep Baseball Report, he entered the postseason with a 3-0 record on the mound backed by a 0.74 ERA and 28 strikeouts in 19 innings.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Kokoska has volunteered locally on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Foundation and as a mentor for children with special needs. "Zach Kokoska is one of the hardest-working, driven kids I have had the pleasure of working with," said Greater Latrobe head coach Matt Basciano. "He is very successful because of his drive to constantly improve. This is not only evident on the field but also in the classroom. It would be easy with the success he has had to feel superior to others, but it is just the opposite with him. He is a true teammate."

Kokoska has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Virginia Tech University of 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.

Kokoska joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Baseball Players of the Year Alex Kirilloff (2015-16, Plum Senior High School), Mike Nikorak (2014-15, Stroudsburg High School), Brendan McKay (2013-14 & 2012-13, Blackhawk High School), Kenny Koplove (2011-12, William Penn Charter School), Derek Fisher (2010-11, Cedar Crest High School), Sean Coyle (2009-10, Germantown Academy), Mike Lubanski (2008-09, Malvern Preparatory School), Zak Sinclair (2007-08, West Allegheny High School), and Devin Mesoraco (2006-07, Punxsutawney High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Zach 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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