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**SEATTLE PREP STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Jesse Franklin of Seattle Prep as its 2016-17 Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year. Franklin is the first Gatorade Washington Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Seattle Prep.

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 Franklin as Washington's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Franklin 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, 197-pound senior outfielder batted .571 with four home runs and 21 RBI this past season, leading the Panthers to a 15-10 record and the Class 3A Metro League semifinals. Ranked as the state's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Perfect Game, Franklin is a three-time First Team All-Metro selection and participated in the 2016 Area Code Games.

An altar server at his church, he has volunteered locally on behalf his parish youth group and was selected as a senior leader for his school's Young Men's Retreat. "Jesse Franklin has been the best hitter in our league and this year he was the top defensive player and the best base-runner," said Kellen Sundin, head coach at Lakeside High. "He is incredibly talented but I appreciate the way he plays the game. He does not make it about him and is a terrific teammate."

Franklin has maintained a 3.37 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Michigan 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.

Franklin joins recent Gatorade Washington Baseball Players of the Year Christian Jones (2015-16, Federal Way High School), Cody Hawken (2014-15, Union High School), Luke Heimlich (2013-14, Puyallup High School), Reese McGuire (2012-13, Kentwood High School), Trevor Lane (2011-12, Mount Si High School), Trevor Mitsui (2010-11, Shorewood High School), Drew Vetteson (2009-10 & 2008-09, Central Kitsap High School), Rusty Shellhorn (2007-08, Central Valley High School), and Greg Peavey (2006-07, Hudson's Bay High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jesse 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.