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**BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WEST VIRGINIA 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 Drew Hefner of Bridgeport High School as its 2016-17 Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year. Hefner is the first Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Bridgeport 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 Hefner as West Virginia's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Hefner 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, 165-pound senior catcher had led the Indians to a 24-6 record at the time of his selection. Hefner owned a .455 batting average with four home runs, 42 RBI and a .615 on-base percentage through 30 games. A First Team All-State honoree, he was also named to USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA West Virginia First Team.

A devoted member of his church community, Hefner has volunteered locally on behalf of youth baseball programs, Shop for Tots and H.I.S. BridgeBuilders. "Drew Hefner is a special baseball player," said Mark Jones, Robert C. Byrd High head coach. "He's the heart and soul of that team, with a great work ethic and the ability to be a coach on the field."

Hefner has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Charleston 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.

Hefner joins recent Gatorade West Virginia Baseball Players of the Year Paul Witt (2015-16, Jefferson High School), Zach Minnick (2014-15, Logan High School), Seth Kinker (2013-14, Cabell Midland High School), Corey Bird (2012-13, Herbert Hoover High School), Korey Dunbar (2011-12, Nitro High School), Tyler Payne (2010-11, Hurricane High School), J.R. Bradley (2009-10, Nitro High School), Corey Miller (2008-09, Cabell Midland High School), Chase Pickering (2007-08, Nitro High School), and Patrick Arnold (2006-07, Huntington High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Drew 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.