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JUNEAU-DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALASKA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (May 29, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Michael Cesar of Juneau-Douglas High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year. Cesar is the fourth Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Juneau-Douglas 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 Cesar as Alaska's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Cesar 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-9, 175-pound senior catcher batted .466 in leading the Bears to a 10-5 record and a state tournament berth at the time of his selection. Cesar collected 20 hits while also producing 12 RBIs, 18 runs and eight stolen bases on as many attempts with an on-base percentage of .491 through 15 games. As the team's primary backstop and a four-time All-Southeast Conference selection, he had knocked out 88 hits and posted a career batting average of .400 entering the postseason.

A National Honor Society member, Cesar has volunteered locally helping to run blood-donation drives and he has donated his time as a peer tutor at school.

"I've been coaching for 18 years up here, and Michael Cesar is as much a mix of class act and great player as I've seen," said Taylor Nerland, head coach of South High School. "If I was going to do a draft of players in the state, he's my first pick. Great energy, great player, great mix of intangibles and tangibles."

The No. 1 student and valedictorian of his class, Cesar has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. Cesar will attend Pacific Lutheran University (Wash.) this fall, where he will play baseball.

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.

Cesar joins recent Gatorade Alaska Baseball Players of the Year Jonny Homza (2016-17 & 2015-16, South Anchorage High School), Nathan Bonck (2014-15, Ketchikan High School), Scooter Bynum (2013-14, Monroe Catholic High School), Erickson Fish (2012-13, Sitka High School), Zach Ferntheil (2011-12, Service High School), Adam Manzer (2010-11, West Anchorage High School), Dylan Baker (2009-10, Juneau-Douglas), Ross Venneberg (2008-09, Sitka High School), Joe Kohan (2007-08, Juneau-Douglas), and Ryan Skillern (2006-07, South High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Cesar 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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