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ASHDOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS 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 Jaden Hill of Ashdown High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year. Hill is the second Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Ashdown 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 Hill as Arkansas' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Hill 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-4, 210-pound senior right-handed pitcher and infielder posted a 7-0 record on the mound with a 0.51 ERA this past season, leading the Panthers (26-10) to the Class 4A state quarterfinals. Hill struck out 85 batters while allowing just 20 hits and 12 walks in 41 innings pitched. He also batted .540 (40-for-87) with 11 home runs, 43 RBIs, 35 runs and a 1.034 slugging percentage. Rated as the No. 1 recruit in Arkansas for the Class of 2018 by Perfect Game and the Prep Baseball Report, he played in the 2017 Under Armour All-America Baseball Game at Wrigley Field.

A two-sport standout who also was a top football recruit as a quarterback, Hill has volunteered locally by mentoring local youth through the Ashdown United Methodist Church in addition to donating his time to the church's food pantry. He has also served as a motivational speaker for students at a local elementary school.

"Jaden is an incredible athlete and baseball player," said Josh Wesson, head coach at Fountain Lake High. "He pitched against our club and was impressive ... On top of pitching a gem, he was just as impressive at the plate."

Hill has maintained a weighted 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at Louisiana State University this fall, but is projected as an early-round selection in June's Major League Baseball draft.

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.

Hill joins recent Gatorade Arkansas Baseball Players of the Year Casey Martin (2016-17, Lonoke High School), Evan Lee (2015-16, Bryant High School), Andy Pagnozzi (2014-15, Fayetteville High School), Trevor Ezell (2013-14, Bryant High School), Carson Shaddy (2012-13, Fayetteville High School), Trey Killian (2011-12, Mountain Home High School), Dillon Howard (2010-11, Searcy High School), Brandon Moore (2009-10, Van Buren), D.J. Baxendale (2008-09, Sylvan Hills), Tyler Wilson (2007-08, Greenwood), and Scott Sammons (2006-07, Searcy) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jaden 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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