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**Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)**

## **AMITY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CONNECTICUT BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 29, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Patrick Winkel of Amity Regional High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Connecticut Baseball Player of the Year. Winkel is the second Gatorade Connecticut Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Amity Regional 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 Winkel as Connecticut's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Winkel 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 catcher had led the Spartans to a 14-5 record at the time of his selection. Winkel produced a .549 batting average with six home runs, 20 RBI and a slugging percentage of 1.098 through 19 games. A two-time All-State honoree and the Southern Connecticut Conference Player of the Year, he is also a Rawlings/Perfect Game Third Team All-American and was selected to USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA Connecticut First Team.

Winkel has volunteered locally on behalf of a soup kitchen, Milford Hospital and the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

"Winkel is just a phenomenal baseball player," said Nick Cerretta, head coach at Xavier High School. "He's smooth, athletic, composed and he controls the game from behind the plate. He's got one of the best arms I've seen, and he's a great, great hitter. You can try to pitch around him, but even if you put it at his ankles he can still golf it out."

Winkel has maintained a weighted 4.55 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Connecticut 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.

Winkel joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Baseball Players of the Year Ben Casparius (2016-17, Staples High School), Jimmy Titus (2015-16 & 2014-15, East Catholic High School), Ronnie Rossomando (2013-14, Bunnell High School), Thomas Milone (2012-13, Masuk High School), Bryan Daniello (2011-12, Brien McMahon High School), Sal Romano (2010-11, Southington High School), Colin O'Keefe (2009-10, Waterford High School), Matt Carasiti (2008-09, Berlin High School), Jason Esposito (2007-08, Amity Regional High School), and Matt Harvey (2006-07, Fitch High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Patrick 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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