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**SHAWNEE HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Peyton Carson of Shawnee Heights High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kansas Baseball Player of the Year. Carson is the first Gatorade Kansas Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Shawnee Heights 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 Carson as Kansas' best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Carson 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, 190-pound senior left-handed pitcher had led the Thunderbirds to an 18-2 record and a berth in the Class 5A state tournament at the time of his selection. Carson posted a 7-0 record with a 0.49 earned run average through 20 games. In 37 innings pitched, he struck out 49 batters while allowing just 23 hits and 14 walks entering the postseason. Ranked as the No. 2 prospect in Kansas in the Class of 2018 by Perfect Game in addition to being named First-Team All-State and the Class 5A Pitcher of the Year, he spun six shutouts and a no-hitter in the regular season.

Carson has donated his time to a local community center, helping parents in need with their children.

"As a rival school who's faced Peyton over the last couple of years, I can confirm he's one of the best we've seen," said Steve Bushnell, head coach at Seaman High. "He's got tremendous upside, a lot of talent. I know he's having a great year, and it sounds like he deserves everything he gets. He's delivered for them."

Carson has maintained a weighted 3.37 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at Missouri State University 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.

Carson joins recent Gatorade Kansas Baseball Players of the Year Conner VanCleave (2016-17, Holcomb High School), Riley Pint (2015-16 & 2014-15, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School), Braden Minor (2013-14, Eisenhower High School), Ryan Colombo (2012-13, Seaman High School), Collin Wiles (2011-12, Blue Valley West High School), Conner Knight (2010-11, Maize High School), Cody Kukuk (2009-10, Free State High School), Garrett Gould (2008-09, Maize High School), Lee Ridenhour (2007-08, Shawnee Mission West High School), and Derek Norris (2006-07, Goddard High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Peyton 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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