

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729-3685)

HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Spencer Schwellenbach of Heritage High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Michigan Baseball Player of the Year. Schwellenbach is the first Gatorade Michigan Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Heritage 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 Schwellenbach as Michigan's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Schwellenbach 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-1, 200-pound senior right-handed pitcher and shortstop had led the Hawks (21-7) to the Division 1 state tournament at the time of his selection. Schwellenbach posted a 4-2 record with a save and a 0.60 ERA through 28 games, striking out 53 batters while allowing just five walks and 14 hits in 35 innings pitched. He also threw a no-hitter. Schwellenbach also batted .376 (26-for-69) with a home run, 16 RBI, 31 runs scored, 20 walks and a .547 on-base percentage entering the postseason. A 2017 First-Team All-State selection by the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association, Schwellenbach is ranked as the state's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2018 by the Prep Baseball Report.

A varsity soccer and baseball captain, Schwellenbach has volunteered locally helping to serve meals at the Saginaw First United Methodist Church. He has also donated his time to the Hartley Outdoor Education Center as a counselor to fourth graders, in addition to serving as a volunteer at local elementary schools and Little League clinics.

"I have had the opportunity to play, coach, and scout many great baseball players during my career, including two years as a minor league hitting instructor with the Oakland A's organization.—Spencer Schwellenbach is one of the best all-around ballplayers I have seen at this level," said Rich Juday, head coach at H.H. Dow High. "Spencer has the ability to dominate a game both on the mound as well as at the plate."

Schwellenbach has maintained a weighted 3.87 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Nebraska 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.

Schwellenbach joins recent Gatorade Michigan Baseball Players of the Year Steve Mann (2016-17, Detroit Country Day School), Tommy Henry (2015-16, Portage Northern High School), Luke Shilling (2014-15, Notre Dame Preparatory School), Kory Young (2013-14, Rockford High School), Jackson Lamb (2012-13, Bedford High School), Brett Sunde (2011-12, Bishop Foley Catholic High School), Joel Seddon (2010-11, St. Clair High School), Jack Livingston (2009-10, Portage Northern High School), Pat Biondi (2008-09, Divine Child High School), Tyler Mills (2007-08, Mt. Pleasant High School), and D.J. LeMahieu (2006-07, Brother Rice High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Spencer 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/>.

###