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**SENECA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Nick Decker of Seneca High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Jersey Baseball Player of the Year. Decker is the first Gatorade New Jersey Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Seneca 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 Decker as New Jersey's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Decker 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, 200-pound senior outfielder and left-handed pitcher had led the Golden Eagles to a 16-5 record and a berth in the second round of the South, Group 3 sectional tournament at the time of his selection. Decker had posted a .500 batting average with seven home runs, four doubles, 24 runs scored and 24 RBI through 21 games. With 27 walks, he had maintained a .692 on-base percentage along with a 1.104 slugging percentage. On the mound, the 2017 Perfect Game First Team All-American owned a 2-1 record with a 0.00 ERA and 20 strikeouts in nine innings pitched.

A member of the Seneca High student government, Decker has volunteered locally as part of multiple fundraising campaigns to benefit pancreatic cancer research in addition to donating his time as a youth baseball coach.

"We see lots of good players game to game, but, obviously, the way Nick Decker carries himself and performs on the field just looks a bit different," said Bob Wankel, head coach of Triton High. "He's a terrific athlete, and the baseball explodes off of his bat. Even the outs he makes, which isn't often, are typically loud."

Decker has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a national letter of intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Maryland 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.

Decker joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Baseball Players of the Year Brad Dobzanski (2016-17, Delsea Regional High School), Luca Dalatri (2015-16 & 2014-15, Christian Brothers Academy), Zach Attianese (2013-14, Old Bridge High School), Rob Kaminsky (2012-13 2011-12, St. Joseph Regional High School), AJ Murray (2010-11, Westfield High School), Bryan Soloman (2009-10, Jackson Memorial High School), Mike Trout (2008-09, Millville High School), Quinton Miller (2007-08, Shawnee High School), and Rick Porcello (2006-07, Seaton Hall Preparatory School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Nick 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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