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## **WEST FARGO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Jake Faircloth of West Fargo High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade North Dakota Baseball Player of the Year. Faircloth is the second Gatorade North Dakota Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Fargo 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 Faircloth as North Dakota's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Faircloth 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 5-foot-11, 185-pound senior shortstop had led the Packers to a 17-2 record at the time of his selection. Faircloth owned a .634 batting average with four triples, 24 runs scored and 29 RBI through 19 games. A First Team All-State honoree, he's also a two-time All-Conference selection and was named to USA TODAY's American Family Insurance ALL-USA North Dakota Second Team.

Faircloth has volunteered locally on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America as well as youth sports programs.

"No team wants to pitch to Faircloth because he can hit any pitch to any part of the field," said Hans Anderson, head coach at Davies High. "He's the backbone of that team defensively and as a leader."

Faircloth has maintained a 3.40 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Bismarck State College 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.

Faircloth joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Baseball Players of the Year Cameron Jorda (2016-17, Dickinson High School), Dalton Feeney (2015-16, Century High School), Colin Hennessy (2014-15, Red River High School), Ian Schultz (2013-14, Fargo North High School), Ellery Bresnahan (2012-13, Central Cass High School), Andy Young (2011-12, West Fargo High School), David Ernst (2010-11 & 2009-10, Fargo South High School), Cole Frenzel (2008-09, Dickinson), Zac Elgie (2007-08, Minot), and Tanner Lorenz (2006-07, Harvey) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Jake 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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