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**EAST PROVIDENCE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Ben Sears of East Providence High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Rhode Island Baseball Player of the Year. Sears is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from East Providence 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 Sears as Rhode Island's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Sears 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 right-handed pitcher and shortstop had led the Townies to a 10-6 record at the time of his selection. Sears owned a 6-2 record with a 1.07 earned run average in 59 innings pitched, striking out 72 batters with just nine walks through 16 games. At the plate, Sears had posted a .500 batting average with nine doubles, 12 runs scored, 15 runs batted in and a .720 slugging percentage.

Sears has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth baseball coach.

"Ben has a natural confidence on the mound and in the batter's box," said Bobby Rodericks, head coach of East Providence High. "When Ben is on the mound we know if we score 1-3 runs we have a really good chance of winning that game."

Sears has maintained a B average in the classroom. He will attend Wheaton College, where he will play baseball, 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.

Sears joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Baseball Players of the Year Sam Kenyon (2016-17, South Kingstown High School), Mason Feole (2015-16, The Prout School), Gian Martellini (2014-15 & 2013-14, Bishop Hendricken High School), Mike King (2012-13, Bishop Hendricken High School), David Hopkins (2011-12, East Greenwich High School), Harrison Barlow (2010-11, South Kingstown High School), Anthony Aceto (2009-10, North Providence), Ryan Morris (2008-09, North Kingstown), and Ryan Westmoreland (2007-08 & 2006-07, Portsmouth), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Ben 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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