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**WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ALASKA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 21, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Leland Wilson of West Anchorage High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year**. Wilson is the first Gatorade Alaska Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from West Anchorage 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 Wilson as Alaska's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year award to be announced in May, Wilson joins an elite alumni association of 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.).

A three-time selection to the Alaska American Legion Team of Excellence, the 6-foot-4, 190-pound senior left-handed pitcher and first baseman led the Eagles (10-3) to third place in the state tournament in 2019, batting .414 with 9 runs scored, 11 RBI and a .541 on-base percentage. In Legion play last summer, he posted a 1.88 ERA and fanned 39 batters in 26 innings pitched.

Also the Rawlings-Perfect game Alaska Player of the Year, Wilson compiled a 13-5 career high school record on the mound with a 1.75 ERA and 243 strikeouts in 140 innings pitched.

He graduates as a two-time First Team All-Cook Inlet Conference selection honoree and is ranked among the nation's Top 500 prospects in his class by Perfect Game.

Also a basketball standout, Wilson has served as a mentor for a special education class and has volunteered locally feeding the homeless and coaching at youth baseball clinics. "Leland has been the most dominant starting pitcher in Alaska high school and American Legion baseball for the past three seasons," said Anchorage West coach John Opinsky. "Over his career, he's left many of the best hitters in the state shaking their heads on the way back to the dugout."

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 and field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Wilson joins recent Gatorade Alaska Baseball Players of the Year Michael Cesar (2017-18, Juneau-Douglas High School), Jonny Homza (2016-17, South Anchorage High School), and Nathan Bonck (2014-15, Ketchikan High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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