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**LAURENS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE® SOUTH CAROLINA BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 24, 2016) — In its 31st year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Thomas Jones of Laurens District High School as its 2015-16 Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year. Jones is the second Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Laurens District 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 Jones as South Carolina's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Jones joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Roy Halladay (1994-95, Arvada West HS, Colo.), David Price (2003-04, Blackman HS, Tenn.), Chipper Jones (1989-90, Bolles School, Fla.), Derek Lee (1992-93, El Camino HS, Calif.) and Jon Lester (2001-02, Bellarmine Prep, Wash.).

The 6-foot-3, 205-pound senior centerfielder batted .420 with five home runs, 19 RBI and 38 runs scored, leading the Raiders (18-11) to the Class 4A district championship game this past season. A 2015 Under Armour All-American, Jones compiled a .716 slugging percentage and stole 16 bases in 17 attempts.

Jones has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has volunteered locally on behalf of an elementary school literacy-outreach program and participated in Palmetto Boys State, an American Legion program providing students with an opportunity to experience the workings of government.

"Thomas Jones is hands down the most talented player we have competed against this year," says Stanley Moss, Emerald High head coach. "He is a five-tool player and what makes him special is how he approaches the game. He is very mature for his age and plays the game with passion, but very under control."

Jones has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Vanderbilt University 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Jones joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Baseball Players of the Year Jake Crawford (2014-15, Belton-Honea Path High School), Grant Holmes (2013-14, Conway High School), Nick Ciuffo (2012-13, Lexington High School), Jamie Callahan (2011-12, Dillon High School), Jordan Montgomery (2010-11, Sumter High School), Forrest Koumas (2009-10, Lugoff-Elgin High School), Madison Younginer (2008-09, Mauldin High School), Zac Fuesser (2007-08, York Comprehensive High School), and Steven Neff (2006-07, Lancaster High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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