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**RIVERDALE BAPTIST SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND BASEBALL PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 30, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Harold Cortijo of Riverdale Baptist School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maryland Baseball Player of the Year. Cortijo is the second Gatorade Maryland Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Riverdale Baptist 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 Cortijo as Maryland's best high school baseball player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year, Cortijo 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, 169-pound senior right-handed pitcher and outfielder posted an 11-0 record with a 0.55 ERA and 86 strikeouts in 63.1 innings this past season, leading the Crusaders to a 30-1 record. Ranked as the state's No. 1 recruit in the Class of 2017 by Prep Baseball Report and a 2016 Washington Post First Team All-Met selection, Cortijo held opposing hitters to a .100 average and also batted .529 with four home runs, 31 RBI and a .798 slugging percentage.

Cortijo has volunteered locally on behalf of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in addition to donating his time as a bible school instructor and as a youth baseball coach. "Harold Cortijo is a fierce competitor who gives his absolute best for his teammates," said Riverdale Baptist head coach Ryan Terrill. "He is a five-tool player who has a chance to be the first Maryland prep player to be taken in this year's MLB draft."

Cortijo has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at Seminole State College 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.

Cortijo joins recent Gatorade Maryland Baseball Players of the Year Tyler Blohm (2015-16, Archbishop Spalding High School), Ljay Newsome (2014-15, Chopticon High School), Cody Morris (2013-14, Reservoir High School), Alex Murphy (2012-13, Calvert Hall College High School), Kevin Mooney (2011-12, North Harford High School), Austin Neary (2010-11, Archbishop Spalding High School), Travis Clark (2009-10, Hammond High School), Jack Carey (2008-09, St. Paul's School), Kevin Brady (2007-08, Gaithersburg High School), and Joseph Yermal (2006-07, McDonogh School) among the state's list of former award winners.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Harold 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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