

ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 11, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Colin Baker of Academic Magnet High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Baker is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Academic Magnet 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 Baker as South Carolina's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in February, Baker joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park High School, Ill.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 6-foot-1, 155-pound senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:48.53. Baker took fourth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships and placed eighth nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning All-American honors. He also posted wins at the Region 7 championships and the Low Country Invitational, while placing third at the Great American Cross Country Festival.

A member of the Math Honor Society, Baker has volunteered locally on behalf of a summer camp. "Colin has put in lots of time, energy and physical work on a year-round basis," said Academic Magnet coach Brian Johnson. "He does much of his running on his own, and the self-discipline he has displayed is unmatched by any athlete I've ever coached."

Baker has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Harvard University this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track and field.

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. 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.

Baker joins Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Wynn Johnson (2017-18, Dorman High School), John Ward (2016-17, Wade Hampton High School), Jackson Ellenburg (2015-16, Ashley Ridge High School), Micah Williams (2014-15, Greer Middle College Charter High School), and Brent Demarest (2013-14, Porter-Gaud School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Baker has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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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