

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

**SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Ethan Marshall of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Marshall is the third Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Saint Thomas Aquinas 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 Marshall as Kansas'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 January, Marshall joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-10, 119-pound junior won the KSHSAA 5A State Championships with a time of 15:38.02, leading the Saints to the program's second consecutive state championship as a team. An All-State selection, Marshall also took 10th to earn Second Team All-Region honors at the NXN Heartland Regional championships, clocking the fastest 5K in the state (15:16.80) among prep runners in 2017 to become the top Kansas finisher in the race.

Marshall has volunteered locally on behalf of Catholic Charities, the Penn House center for the needy, Turnstyles, Harvesters and the Lakeview Retirement Village. A nominated attendee of the Rotary Youth Leadership Award Camp at the University of Kansas, he has also donated his time as a soccer and cross country camp volunteer, in addition to serving as a mentor to incoming freshman at his school. "Ethan is by far the most worthy runner in Kansas for this award," said Chris McAfee, the head coach at Mill Valley. "He was the top Kansas finisher at the Nike Heartland meet, narrowly missing a trip to nationals. He proved himself to be a tough and gritty racer, meeting all challenges, and his improvement over the past year was incredible."

Marshall has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Marshall joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Will Cole (2016-17, Saint Thomas Aquinas), Belesti Akalu (2015-16, Shawnee Mission North High School), Stuart McNutt (2014-15 & 2013-14, Blue Valley West High School), Colton Donahue (2012-13, Blue Valley High School), Jacob Morgan (2011-12, Washburn Rural High School), Evan Landes (2010-11, Mulvane High School), Roy Wedge (2009-10, Lawrence), PJ Greer (2008-09, Saint Thomas Aquinas), and Bryce Volz (2007-08, Bishop Carroll Catholic) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Marshall 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/>.

###