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**MCDONOGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 Dalton Hengst of McDonogh School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hengst is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from McDonogh 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 Hengst as Maryland'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, Hengst 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 state's returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-7, 140-pound senior won his third-straight MIAA Class A state meet this past season with a time of 15:35.6, breaking the tape 9.0 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Eagles to a sixth-place finish as a team. Hengst placed fourth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and then finished 24th at Foot Locker nationals. He was undefeated against in-state competition.

A tour guide at McDonogh School, Hengst has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels and as a youth running and soccer coach. "Dalton is unbeatable and has been for two years," said Gene Hoffman, head coach of Archbishop Curley High. "He is the best runner I've seen in our conference since the inception of the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (in 1994)."

Hengst has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at the University of Mississippi 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.

Two-time winner Hengst joins Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Eric Walz (2015-16, Dulaney High School), Diego Zarate (2014-15, Northwest High School), Ryan Forsyth (2013-14, Severna Park High School), William Bertrand (2012-13, Clarksburg High School), Braden Bruning (2011-12, Linganore High School), Chris Miller (2010-11, Northwest High School), Andrew Palmer (2009-10, Walt Whitman), Zach Sullivan (2008-09, Archbishop Spalding), and Joey Thompson (2007-08, Howard) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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

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