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## **ROSEVILLE AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Acer Iverson of Roseville Area High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Iverson is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Roseville Area 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 Iverson as Minnesota'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, Iverson 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-8, 115-pound junior finished sixth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships this past season with a time of 15:04.10 and then crossed the line 81st at the NXN Final. Iverson placed second in the Class AA state meet in 15:31.8. He won his first seven races on the season.

A member of Roseville High's Human Rights Club and student council, Iverson has volunteered locally as a teacher's aide at his church. "Acer is a young man who is tenacious, hates to lose and goes out and leads from the start," said Dan Kovacich, head coach of White Bear Lake High. "He is a beautiful runner with wonderful form."

Iverson has maintained a 3.96 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.

Iverson joins Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Alex Miley (2016-17, Maple Grove Senior High School), Jaret Carpenter (2015-16, Wayzata High School), Connor Olson (2014-15 & 2013-14, Wayzata High School), Matt Welch (2012-13, Proctor High School), Josh Thorson (2011-12, Wayzata High School), Adam Zutz (2010-11, St. Francis High School), Aaron Bartnik (2009-10, Eden Prairie High School), Lukas Gemar (2008-09, Moorhead High School), and Jordan Carlson (2007-08, Rosemount High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Iverson 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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