

Contact: Kelsey Rhoney (312-729- 3685)

CONCORD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 Forest MacKenzie of Concord High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. MacKenzie is the first Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Concord 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 MacKenzie as New Hampshire'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, MacKenzie 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, 145-pound junior won the NHIAA Division 1 state meet this past season, breaking the tape with a time of 16:12.20 and leading the Crimson Tide to the program's first divisional title in over 30 years. He also became the first Concord runner to win the DI state championship since 1963. An All-State and All-New England selection, MacKenzie took 14th at the New England Championships with a time of 16:02.75—the fastest New Hampshire runner in the field—then clocked a 16:52.00 to finish 31st at the NXN Northeast Regional championships. MacKenzie, who ran the state's fastest 5K (15:29.10) in 2017, captured bronze at the state Meet of Champions with a time of 15:38.20, crossing the line 7.8 seconds off the winning pace.

A member of the NHIAA Life of An Athlete Student Leadership Committee, MacKenzie has volunteered locally with Best Buddies by pairing fellow Concord students with peers possessing unique learning differences to promote teamwork, empathy and community. "Forest puts in the necessary hard work and certainly reaps the benefits," said Coe-Brown Northwood Academy co-head coach Tim Cox. "He is a fierce competitor due to his pure love of the sport and competition. He has a tremendous sense of pride in himself, school and family, but also has a tremendous sense of sportsmanship, and he's usually the first to congratulate fellow competitors. I'm looking forward to see what he can do moving forward since he has just recently dedicated himself to running year round."

MacKenzie has maintained a 92.7 average 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.

MacKenzie joins Gatorade New Hampshire Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Patrick O'Brien (2016-17, Oyster River High School), Cameron Daly (2015-16, Inter-Lakes High School), Eli Moskowitz (2014-15, Souhegan High School), Jeremy Brassard (2013-14 & 2012-13, Coe-Brown Northwood Academy), Colton Ham (2011-12, Merrimack Valley High School), Samuel Gagnon (2010-11, Manchester Central High School), Eric Jenkins (2009-10, Portsmouth High School), Eric Malnati (2008-09, Fall Mountain Regional High School), and Alex McGrath (2007-08, ConVal High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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

###