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**LINCOLN CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 Luke Murphy of Lincoln Christian High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Murphy is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln Christian 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 Murphy as Oklahoma'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, Murphy 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-7, 130-pound senior won the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 16:29.7, breaking the tape 12.98 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Bulldogs to a fourth-straight first-place finish as a team. Murphy took 20th at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships and finished 63rd at the Foot Locker South Regional championships.

A member of the Lincoln Christian High student council, Murphy has participated in service-mission trips to Israel and Honduras and he has volunteered locally as a teacher's aide at his church. "Luke is an amazing runner to watch because he truly makes racing look easy and effortless," said Kaleb Fischer, head coach of Weatherford High. "He goes out strong and sets the tone of the race for all other runners, and he does not fail to keep that high intensity pace the whole race."

Murphy has maintained a weighted 4.13 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Murphy joins Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Matt Young (2016-17, Jenks High School), Isai Rodriguez (2015-16, Ringwood High School), Ben Barrett (2014-15 & 2013-14, Norman North High School), Noah Gade (2012-13, Stillwater High School), Tanner Satterthwaite (2011-12, Norman High School), Andrew Leahey (2010-11, Plainview High School), Toby Bothwell (2009-10, Westmoore High School), Taylor Monaghan (2008-09, Union High School), and Steven Baker (2007-08, Union High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Murphy 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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