

## MAUI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE HAWAII BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

**CHICAGO** (February 11, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Hunter Shields of Maui High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Shields is the first Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Maui 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 Shields as Hawaii'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 February, Shields joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park High School, Ill.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-9, 128-pound sophomore took second the state meet this past season with a time of 16:59.36, leading the Sabers to the state championships. Shields was the co-MVP of the Maui Interscholastic League and won four of nine races on the season.

Shields has volunteered locally with the Maui Humane Society and as a youth soccer referee. He has also donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Hunter killed it in the league competition and at the state championships," said Jeremy Delatore, head coach of Kamehameha School-Maui. "His training and his determination made him great."

Shields has maintained a 3.79 GPA in the classroom and represents one of the state's top academic candidates in meeting the Gatorade award's broad criteria. He will begin his junior 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Shields joins Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Colby Otero (2017-18, Kalaheo High School), Connor Lehl (2016-17, Punahou School), Kaeo Kruse (2015-16 & 2014-15, Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), and Davis Kaahanui (2013-14, Kapalama High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Shields has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [www.Gatorade.com/POY](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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