

## JOHN HERSEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Josh Methner of John Hersey High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Methner is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from John Hersey 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 Methner as Illinois' 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, Methner 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-8, 127-pound junior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:11.5, leading the Huskies to a second-place finish as a team. Methner earned All-American honors at both national championship meets, placing sixth at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships and 15th at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. He broke the tape at the Richard Spring Invitational and the Palatine Invitational, while finishing second at the NXN Midwest Regional championships and seventh at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships.

Methner has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's youth group. "Josh's passion for improvement and competition is something that most can't even come close to matching," said John Hersey High School coach Kevin Young. "He has logged nearly 1,500 miles since the start of the summer, and the results speak for themselves."

Methner has maintained a 3.65 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. 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.

Methner joins Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Danny Kilrea (2017-18, Lyons Township High School), Dylan Jacobs (2016-17, Carl Sandburg High School), Jon Davis (2015-16, Oakwood High School), and Jesse Reiser (2014-15 & 2013-14, McHenry Community 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," Methner 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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