

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KANSAS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 11, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Ethan Marshall of St. Thomas Aquinas High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Marshall is the third Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from St. Thomas Aquinas 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 Marshall as Kansas' 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, Marshall 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-10, 125-pound senior won the KSHSAA 5A individual state championship this past season, breaking the tape with a time of 15:33.9 and leading the Saints to the state team title. The Greater Kansas City Cross Country Coaches Association Runner of the Year, Marshall finished 20.4 seconds in front of his next-closest competitor with the fastest all-class time of the day at the state meet. He crossed the line 12th as the top Kansas runner at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, clocking a 15:32.50, and was also the top finisher from Kansas at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships (32nd, 16:54.80).

Nominated for an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, Marshall has attended an invite-only, week-long Rotary Youth Leadership Award Camp at the University of Kansas. A devoted member of his Holy Trinity Catholic Church community, he has volunteered locally sorting clothing and unloading vehicles on behalf of TurnStyles Thrift Store as well as for Penn House, a community service organization. He has also donated his time to the Kansas City Heroes charity in addition to packaging food and health-related goods for the Harvesters Community Food Network, which serves the needy. A past participant in Boy Scouts service projects which built shelves at an area school and assisted in a blood-donation drive, he has also moved equipment and painted for Christ Our Savior Middle School. "Ethan is a relentless competitor with a knack for racing that is advanced beyond his age," said St. Thomas Aquinas High School head coach Justin Wrigley. "No race is too big and no competitor is too strong to get him rattled or distract him from executing in the race the way that he wants to. I'm impressed with his remarkable ability to rise to any occasion and to execute in big races when the stakes are at their highest. However, I am even more impressed that he understands getting to that level as a competitor means he has had to pay attention to all of the details of the daily routine that prepare him to perform under such circumstances. He leaves nothing undone in training and preparation and that is not common with teenage athletes in my experience."

Marshall has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided on 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. 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.

Two-time winner Marshall joins Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Will Cole (2016-17, Saint Thomas Aquinas), Belesti Akalu (2015-16, Shawnee Mission North High School), and Stuart McNutt (2014-15 & 2013-14, Blue Valley West 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," Marshall 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, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.