

## MOUNT ARARAT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE 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 **Lisandro Berry-Gaviria of Mount Ararat High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Maine Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Berry-Gaviria is the first Gatorade Maine Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Mount Ararat 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 Berry-Gaviria as Maine'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, Berry-Gaviria 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, 133-pound junior won the Class A state meet this past season with a time of 15:35.40, breaking the tape 26.85 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Eagles to a seventh-place finish as a team. Berry-Gaviria took third at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and finished 46th at Nike Cross Nationals Final. He was unbeaten against in-state competition.

An avid photographer and guitar player, Berry-Gaviria has volunteered locally as a youth running coach. "Lisandro was exceptional this season, clearly the class of the state," said Jorma Kurry, co-head coach of Falmouth High School. "He is fun to watch because he can win a race with a variety of strategies, whether it is taking control of the race from the beginning, making a strong move mid-race or kicking to the finish off a slow pace."

Berry-Gaviria has maintained a 4.0 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.

Berry-Gaviria joins Gatorade Maine Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Luke Laverdiere (2017-18 & 2016-17, Yarmouth High School), Paul Casavant (2015-16, Hampden Academy), Aaron Willingham (2014-15, Mt. Blue High School), and Josef Holt-Andrews (2013-14, Telstar Regional 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," Berry-Gaviria 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](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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