

FLATHEAD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Ben Perrin of Flathead High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Perrin is the second Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Flathead 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 Perrin as Montana'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, Perrin 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 6-foot-1, 160-pound senior won the Class AA state meet this past season with a time of 15:43.60, breaking the tape 12.19 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Braves to a 10th-place finish as a team. Perrin took 42nd at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships, the only time in nine races during the season that he did not win. Perrin's older brothers Zach (2011-12, 2012-13) and Jake (2015-16) are both former Gatorade Runners of the Year in Montana.

Perrin has volunteered locally with The Market Beautiful, a traveling vintage market, and as a youth running coach. "As a runner, Ben is super-strong," said Casey Jermyn, head coach of Bozeman High. "He sets a good early pace with many of his races and doesn't look back. He ran pretty tough all year."

Perrin has maintained a B average 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. 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.

Perrin joins Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Duncan Hamilton (2017-18, Bozeman High School), Chase Equall (2016-17, Bozeman High School), Aidan Reed (2015-16 & 2014-15, Helena High School), and Jason Holmes (2013-14, Bozeman 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," Perrin 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.

###