

## CASADY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 **Sam Bass of Casady School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Bass is the first Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Casady 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 Bass as Oklahoma'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, Bass 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-9 120-pound junior finished second at the Southwest Prep Conference Championships this past season with a time of 15:46.53, leading the Cyclones to an eighth-place finish as a team. Bass took 33rd at the Foot Locker South Regional championships and he won the Oklahoma Cross Country & Track Coaches Association Meet of Champions by 12 seconds.

Bass has volunteered with SBP, a national disaster management group, assisting with flood relief in Houston in 2018. He has also donated his time to an area food bank and the Boys & Girls Club of Oklahoma County. "Sam has gained more confidence in his abilities, taken more risks to get into good racing positions and has learned to push himself beyond the comfort zone to be a champion," said Roxanne Sterling, head coach of the Casady School. "Sam is the complete package and we are fortunate to have him on our team."

Bass has maintained a weighted 3.88 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.

Bass joins Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Luke Murphy (2017-18, Lincoln Christian High School), Matt Young (2016-17, Jenks High School), Isai Rodriguez (2015-16, Ringwood High School), and Ben Barrett (2014-15 & 2013-14, Norman North 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," Bass 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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