

## KNOXVILLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 **Jake Renfree of Knoxville Catholic High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Renfree is the first Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Knoxville Catholic 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 Renfree as Tennessee'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, Renfree joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg High School, 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-3, 155-pound senior finished second at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:19.5 to earn First Team All-American status. Renfree also won the Division 1 Large state meet in 15:25.58, breaking the tape 15.27 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. He was the Metro Knoxville Cross Country Runner of the Year.

A member of the Spanish National Honor Society, Renfree has volunteered locally at the East Tennessee Children's Hospital, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through Youth Leadership Knoxville. "Jake works through the ups and downs of racing to succeed at the finish line," said Ashley Powell, head coach of Bearden High. "He is a fun runner to watch."

Renfree has maintained a weighted 4.33 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Renfree joins Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Carter Coughlin (2017-18, Webb School of Knoxville), Brodey Hasty (2016-17 & 2015-16, Brentwood High School), Adam Barnard (2014-15, Daniel Boone High School), and Aaron Templeton (2013-14, Hardin Valley Academy) 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," Renfree 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).