

**CONARD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Gavin Sherry of Conard High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Sherry is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Conard 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 Sherry as Connecticut'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, Sherry 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, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-6, 125-pound sophomore raced to the State Open individual championship this past season with a time of 15:38. Sherry also won the Class LL title, leading the Chieftains to the Class LL crown as a team. After breaking the tape at the New England Championships, he took second at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and finished 14th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning All-American honors. Sherry also chalked up wins at the Ocean State Invitational and the Haddad Windham Invitational.

A talented trombonist, Sherry has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives. "Gavin's largest asset this season was a mental toughness, wherein he welcomed the competition and realized that it brought out the best in him," said Conard coach Ron Knapp. "His approach to training and racing matured each week."

Sherry has maintained an A average in the classroom. He will begin his junior 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 and 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.

Sherry joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Matthew Farrell (2018-19, Loomis Chaffee School), Drew Thompson (2017-18, Fairfield College Preparatory School), Zakeer Ahmad (2016-17, Staples High School), Eric van der Els (2015-16, Brien McMahon High School) and Alex Ostberg (2014-15, Darien High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Sherry 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.