

**CHARTER SCHOOL OF WILMINGTON STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Andrew Avila of Charter School of Wilmington as its 2019-20 Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Avila is the third Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Charter School of Wilmington.

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 Avila as Delaware'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, Avila 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-7, 135-pound senior raced to second place at the Division 1 state championship meet this past season with a time of 15:53.2, leading the Force to the state title as a team. Avila broke the tape at the New Castle County Championships, the Joe O'Neill Invitational, the Diamond State Conference championships and the Varsity E race at the Manhattan Invitational in 2019.

Avila has served as a peer tutor and has volunteered locally on behalf of his school's Eco Alliance organization. "Andrew was very determined and very focused, and he had a dominant year," said Charter School of Wilmington coach Rick Schuder. "He had a goal of getting a state championship with his team, and the team rallied around him to accomplish it."

Avila has maintained a 4.46 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Harvard University this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track and field.

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.

Avila joins recent Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Connor Nisbet (2018-1, 2017-18 & 2016-17, Wilmington Friends School), Kevin Murray (2015-16, Charter School of Wilmington) and Kieran Tuntivate (2014-15, Charter School of Wilmington), among the state's list of former award winners.

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