

**GONZAGA COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 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 Cullen Capuano of Gonzaga College High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Capuano is the third Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Gonzaga College 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 Capuano as District of Columbia'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, Capuano 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 6-foot-4, 160-pound senior raced to the D.C. State Athletic Association individual championship this past season with a time of 16:35.1, leading the Eagles to the DCSAA title as a team. Capuano also broke the tape at the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference championships, the Jesuit championships, the Spiked Shoe Invitational and the Ben Blosser Bulldog Invitational.

A peer tutor in his school, Capuano has volunteered locally on behalf of food-donation drives for the needy and has participated in a service-mission trip to support inner-city families. "Cullen has a great work ethic and approaches all aspects of training with seriousness and attention to detail," said Gonzaga coach John Ausema. "In my 15 years of coaching, he's one of only three runners to make our varsity team as a freshman, and he's been a leader for all four years."

Capuano has maintained a 4.1 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Washington University in St. Louis 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.

Capuano joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Luke Tewalt (2018-19, Washington Latin Public Charter School), Gavin McElhennon (2017-18, Gonzaga College High School), Harry Monroe (2016-17, Gonzaga College High School), and Tristan Colaizzi (2015-16 & 2014-15, Georgetown Day School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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