

**JOHN HERSEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Josh Methner of John Hersey High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Methner is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from John Hersey 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 Methner as Illinois' 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, Methner 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-8, 130-pound senior raced to the national championship this past season, breaking the tape at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships with a time of 15:08.8. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Methner also won the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 15:46.7 and the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships in 14:57.7, then took second nationally at the NXN Final in 15:06.1. He captured the Class 3A individual state championship with a course-record time of 13:49.86.

Methner has donated his time on behalf of the St. Peter Lutheran Church in addition to belonging to the church youth group. "Josh never lets the moment get too big," said Hersey coach Kevin Young. "His consistency this whole year was remarkable. There's no secret pill—he's got natural ability and he works really hard."

Methner has maintained a weighted 3.74 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 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.

Two-time winner Methner joins Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Danny Kilrea (2017-18, Lyons Township High School), Dylan Jacobs (2016-17, Carl Sandburg High School), Jon Davis (2015-16, Oakwood High School) and Jesse Reiser (2014-15, McHenry Community High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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