

**MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Conner O'Shea of Madison Central High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. O'Shea is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Madison Central 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 O'Shea as Kentucky'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, O'Shea 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, 133-pound senior won the Class AAA state meet this past season with a time of 15:50.60, breaking the tape 11.98 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Indians to a fourth-place finish as a team. O'Shea also won the 17-18 Division at the Cross Country Coaches National Youth Championships and took 16th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships. His sister, Ciara, was the state's 2019-20 Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year.

An exceptional carpenter, O'Shea has volunteered locally as a camp counselor, and he has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Conner has really progressed as a runner," said Jason Moncer, head coach of West Jessamine High. "This year he really made a statement about being the best cross country runner in Kentucky."

O'Shea has maintained a weighted 4.26 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at East Carolina University 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.

O'Shea joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Keeton Thornsberry (2018-19 & 2017-18, Holy Cross High School), Yared Nuguse (2016-17, duPont Manual High School), Cole Dowdy (2015-16, South Oldham High School) and Ethan Shuley (2014-15, Highlands High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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