

**KING PHILIP REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Mike Griffin of King Philip Regional High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Griffin is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from King Philip Regional 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 Griffin as Massachusetts' 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, Griffin 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, 145-pound senior won the Division 1 state meet this past season with a time of 16:06, breaking the tape seven seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. Griffin took 36th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships after qualifying with an eighth-place finish at the Foot Locker East Regional championships.

Griffin has volunteered locally on behalf of a fundraising campaign to benefit Leukemia research, and he has donated his time as a youth track coach. "Mike never backed down and never seemed to be out of a race no matter what," said Nick Bailey, head coach of Franklin High. "When the meets really counted, Mike was the best in the state without a doubt."

Griffin has maintained a weighted 3.46 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Tennessee 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.

Griffin joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Ryan Oosting (2018-19, Arlington High School), Tristan Shelgren (2017-18, St. John's Preparatory School), Marcelo Rocha (2016-17, Peabody High School), Viraj Deokar (2015-16, Middlesex School) and Quinn Cooney (2014-15, Chelmsford High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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