

**NORTH STAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 Liem Chot of North Star High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Chot is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from North Star 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 Chot as Nebraska'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, Chot 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, 180-pound junior repeated as Division A state meet champion this past season, breaking the tape with a time of 15:50.30 to finish 4.4 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and lead the Navigators to a third-place finish as a team. Chot was unbeaten during the regular season.

Chot fled civil war in the Sudan along with his two brothers and moved to Nebraska, where he was formally adopted by his older sister. He has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and has donated his time on behalf of road races as well as multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Liem is a very efficient runner with very long strides and has developed, with maturity and strength, a pretty solid kick at the end of races," said Matt Musiel, head coach of Lincoln North Star High. "He prefers to chase, but is growing as a runner where he will continue to learn how to lead from the front and push the pace."

Chot has maintained a weighted 4.05 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Chot joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Ben Arens (2018-19, Ainsworth High School), Jake Ralston (2017-18, Papillion-La Vista South High School), Seth Hirsch (2016-17 & 2015-16, Millard West High School), and John Nownes (2014-15, Creighton Preparatory School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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