

**VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 Christian Franklin of Valley High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Nevada Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Franklin is the first Gatorade Nevada Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Valley 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 Franklin as Nevada'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, Franklin 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-3, 165-pound senior raced to his second consecutive Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:33. Franklin also broke the tape at the Southern Region championships, the Larry Burgess Las Vegas Invitational, the Falcon Invitational and the Lake Mead Invitational in 2019.

Franklin has volunteered locally on behalf of the Three Square food bank and his school's Best Buddies program. "Last year, Christian was challenged at every race he ran, but this season he had to challenge himself because many times, he didn't have anyone pressing him," said Valley coach Sergio Segura. "His positive attitude, commitment and team focus are characteristics that really rubbed off on his teammates."

Franklin has maintained a 3.13 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Franklin joins recent Gatorade Nevada Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Jared Marchegger (2018-19, Sierra Lutheran High School), William Fallini-Haas (2017-18, Spring Creek High School), Anthony Ocegueda (2016-17, Reed High School), Chase Wood (2015-16, Faith Lutheran High School) and DaJour Braxton (2014-15, Centennial High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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