

HENRY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 Silas Winders of Henry County High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Winders is the first Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Henry County 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 Winders as Tennessee'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, Winders 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-10, 135-pound senior won the Division 1 Large School state meet this past season with a time of 15:28.98, breaking the tape 3.87 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. Winders finished 10th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships and then took 39th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. He also won the Mustang Stampede and placed second at the Alexander/Asics Invitational in Georgia in 14:29.32, a time which ranked No. 6 in the nation among prep competitors.

An avid angler and hunter, Winders has volunteered locally at the Henry County Relay for Life Survivors Dinner. He has also donated his time on behalf of a karate day camp and with multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Silas ran the whole season with a target on his back as the person to beat, and still performed well each week," said Rob Pautienus, head coach of Brentwood High. "He runs smart tactically and is willing to make gutsy moves with the opportunity presents itself."

Winders has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country 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.

Winders joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Jake Renfree (2018-19, Knoxville Catholic High School), Carter Coughlin (2017-18, Webb School of Knoxville), Brodey Hasty (2016-17 & 2015-16, Brentwood High School) and Adam Barnard (2014-15, Daniel Boone High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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