

**LEWIS & CLARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Wil Smith of Lewis & Clark High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Smith is the second Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lewis & Clark 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 Smith as Washington'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, Smith 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-1, 137-pound senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:03.3. Smith took fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships and finished 10th nationally at the NXN Final, earning All-American honors in the process. He also won at the Tracy Walters Invitational and the Mountain West Classic in 2019, in addition to crossing the line third at the Bob Firman Invitational.

Smith has volunteered locally on behalf of Washington Family Ranch Young Life Camp. "The first trait that comes to mind with Wil Smith is driven," said Lewis and Clark coach Michael Lee. "He brings great athletic talents to the table, but where he really shines is in his dedication to his sport. He has incredible toughness and carried out a life-long drive to become a state champion."

Smith has maintained a 3.9 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Gonzaga 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.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Washington Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Joe Waskom (2018-19, Mount Si High School), James Mwaura (2017-18, Lincoln High School), Tibeđu Proctor (2016-17, The Northwest School), Justin Janke (2015-16, North Central High School) and Tanner Anderson (2014-15, North Central High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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