

**Contact: John Manzo (312-729-3656)**

**MCDONOGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2017) — In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Dalton Hengst of McDonogh School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hengst is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from McDonogh 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 racecourse, distinguishes Hengst as Maryland'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 January, Hengst joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-7, 140-pound junior won his second-straight MIAA Class A state meet this past season with a time of 15:29.3, breaking the tape 37.4 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Eagles to a fifth-place finish as a team. Hengst took fifth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and finished 21st at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. He also won the Maryland & DC Private Schools Championships and went undefeated against in-state competition in 2016.

Hengst has volunteered locally on behalf of Meals on Wheels and as a youth running and soccer coach. "Dalton is a tremendous athlete and runner," said Andy Witte, head coach of Archbishop Spalding High. "He is dominant right now. He has great competitive instincts and heart."

Hengst has maintained a B average 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 & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Hengst joins Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Eric Walz (2015-16, Dulaney High School), Diego Zarate (2014-15, Northwest High School), Ryan Forsyth (2013-14, Severna Park High School), William Bertrand (2012-13, Clarksburg High School), Braden Bruning (2011-12, Linganore High School), Chris Miller (2010-11, Northwest High School), Andrew Palmer (2009-10, Walt Whitman High School), Zach Sullivan (2008-09, Archbishop Spalding High School), and Joey Thompson (2007-08, Howard High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hengst will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [www.gatorade.com/poy](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

###