

**HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 Leo Daschbach of Highland High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Daschbach is the first Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Highland 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 Daschbach as Arizona'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, Daschbach 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, 140-pound senior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:27.6, leading the Hawks to the state title as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Daschbach also broke the tape at the prestigious Mt. SAC Invitational, the Nike Desert Twilight Festival, the District championships, and the Desert Solstice Invitational. He took second at the Clovis Invitational.

Daschbach has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs. "Leo is a competitor and he makes every decision based on the good of the team," said Highland coach David Montgomery. "He strained his hamstring a week before the state meet, but he decided to run to give his teammates a chance of winning the championship. He said if his season is over after the state meet, that's fine, because it's team first, me second."

Daschbach has maintained a weighted 4.23 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Two-time winner Daschbach joins Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Rylan Stubbs (2017-18, Campo Verde High School), Manuel Olivo-Quinones (2016-17, Buena High School), D. J. Harris (2015-16, Desert Vista High School) and Carlos Villarreal (2014-15, Rio Rico High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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