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**LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 2018) — In its 33<sup>rd</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Danny Kilrea of Lyons Township High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Kilrea is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lyons Township 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 Kilrea as Illinois'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, Kilrea 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, 125-pound senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:08. Kilrea was the only runner in the country to place in the top five of both national championship races, finishing third at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 15:27.3 and fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals in 15:14.5 to achieve double All-American honors. He also broke the tape at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, the Mike Kuharic Invitational, the First to the Finish Invitational and the Culver Academies Invitational. Kilrea crossed the line second at the NXN Midwest Regional championships and was the top American finisher, fourth overall, at the Great Edinburgh XCcountry International Challenge in January.

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Kilrea has maintained a 3.97 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 Notre Dame 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.

Kilrea joins Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Dylan Jacobs (2016-17, Carl Sandburg High School), Jon Davis (2015-16, Oakwood High School), Jesse Reiser (2014-15 & 2013-14, McHenry Community High School), Jack Keelan (2012-13, St. Ignatius College Prep.), Michael Clevenger (2011-12, MacArthur High School), Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11 & 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School), Steve Sulkin (2008-09, York), and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Kilrea 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 the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. 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 <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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