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## **HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 Keeton Thornsberry of Holy Cross High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Thornsberry is the second Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Holy Cross 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 Thornsberry as Kentucky'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, Thornsberry 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 6-foot, 145-pound junior won the Class A state meet this past season with a time of 16:09.37, breaking the tape 25.87 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Cougars to a first-place finish as a team. A two-time state champion, Thornsberry took 19th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships.

A school ambassador at Holy Cross, Thornsberry has volunteered locally at the St. Joseph Orphanage in Cincinnati. "I've had the privilege of seeing Keeton run many times—unfortunately I am usually on the wrong side of his amazing performances," said Chris Snyder, head coach of Louisville Collegiate School. "He is not only an amazing competitor, he has exemplary character."

Thornsberry has maintained a weighted 4.34 GPA 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.

Thornsberry joins Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Yared Nuguse (2016-17, duPont Manual High School), Cole Dowdy (2015-16, South Oldham High School), Ethan Shuley (2014-15, Highlands High School), Patrick Gregory (2013-14, Butler Traditional High School), Jacob Thomson (2012-13 & 2011-12, Holy Cross High School), Evan Ehrenheim (2010-11, Daviess County High School), Ryan Eaton (2009-10 & 2008-09, Greenwood), and Gordy Dooley (2007-08, St. Henry District) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Thornsberry 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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