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**POINT PLEASANT BOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 12, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Devin Hart of Point Pleasant Borough High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hart is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Point Pleasant Borough 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 Hart as New Jersey'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, Hart 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-11, 150-pound junior raced to the state Meet of Champions individual title this past season with a time of 15:35. Hart also won the Group 2 state championship in 15:34 and broke the tape at the Bowdoin Park Classic, the Shore Coaches Invitational and the Ocean County Championships. He finished sixth at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships and placed 10th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning All-American status.

A devoted member of his church community, Hart has volunteered as a math tutor in his school. "Devin is competitive, focused and willing to sacrifice for the good of the entire team," said Point Pleasant Boro coach Kevin Conheeny. "He's demanding of himself and sets forth a fine example for his teammates."

Hart has maintained an A 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.

Hart joins Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Elliot Gindi (2016-17, Ocean Township High School), Joshua Clark (2015-16, Highland Regional High School), Nikhil Pulimood (2014-15, West Windsor-Plainsboro South High School), Mike McClemens (2013-14, Christian Brothers Academy), Edward Cheserek (2012-13, St. Benedict's Prep.), Tim Ball (2011-12, Piscataway High School), Jim Rosa (2010-11 & 2009-10, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North High School), Tyler Udland (2008-09, Millburn High School), and Brandon Jarrett (2007-08, St. Benedict's Prep) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Hart 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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