

**PEAK TO PEAK CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 28, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Quinn McConnell of Peak to Peak Charter School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. McConnell is the first Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Peak to Peak Charter 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 McConnell as Colorado's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in February, McConnell 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-9 senior raced to fifth place at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships this past season with a time of 17:15.8. McConnell took 31st nationally at the NXN Final and finished third at the Class 3A state meet in 18:43.3. She broke the tape at the Desert Twilight Festival, the Metro League meet and the Region 3 championships.

McConnell has volunteered locally on behalf of an animal hospital and a therapeutic horse-riding program for the disabled. "Quinn McConnell is very competitive and obviously very talented," said Devin Rourke, head coach at Centaurus High. "She's overcome a lot of challenges and has remained resilient and strong."

McConnell has maintained a weighted 4.76 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Furman University 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.

McConnell joins Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Jenna Fitzsimmons (2017-18, Mountain Vista High School), Brie Oakley (2016-17, Grandview High School), Katie Rainsberger (2015-16 & 2014-15, Air Academy High School), and Elise Cranny (2013-14, Niwot High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," McConnell has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She 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.