

## **WASHBURN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MINNESOTA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 28, 2019) — In its 34<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Emily Covert of Washburn High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Covert is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Washburn 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 racecourse, distinguishes Covert as Minnesota'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, Covert 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-4 senior earned dual All-American honors by finishing fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Final and fifth at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season. Covert also won both the NXN Heartland Regional championships and the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships. In addition, she broke her own meet record in winning the Class AA state meet in 17:03.4, finishing 25.4 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor.

Covert has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and has donated her time at the Animal Humane Society in St. Paul. "Emily is arguably the best overall distance great in our state ever," said Dave Emmans, head coach of Wayzata High School. "She has been dominant the last two years. No one's even close."

Covert has maintained a 3.29 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Colorado 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.

Covert joins Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Tierney Wolfram (2017-18, Math & Science Academy), Lauren Peterson (2016-17, Farmington High School), and Bethany Hasz (2015-16, 2014-15 & 2013-14, Alexandria Area 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," Covert 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).