

**PAPILLION-LA VISTA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 Kaylie Crews of Papillion-La Vista South High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Crews is the first Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Papillion-La Vista South 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 Crews as Nebraska'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, Crews 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-6 sophomore won the Class A state meet this past season with a time of 18:42.5, breaking the tape 23.2 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Titans to a third-place finish as a team. Crews finished 42nd at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, the top Nebraska runner by 11 seconds.

Crews has volunteered as a Titan Ambassador at Papio South High, and she has donated her time at a local soup kitchen. "Kaylie's performance at the state meet showed her dominance," said Colin Johnston, head coach of Millard West High. "She took off in the race and nobody could go with her and she ran away with the individual state championship."

Crews has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Crews joins Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Gabby McGinn (2017-18, Millard West High School), Taylor Somers (2016-17 & 2015-16, Millard South High School), and Jeralyn Poe (2014-15 & 2013-14, Lincoln North Star 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," Crews 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.