

**SOUTH LAKE TAHOE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 Carissa Buchholz of South Lake Tahoe High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Buchholz is the first Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from South Lake Tahoe 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 Buchholz as Nevada'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, Buchholz 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 junior raced to the Class 3A state championship this past season with a time of 19:01.9. Buchholz won at the Reed Invitational, the Fernley Roadhill Invitational, the Northern Region championships and the Flat SAC Invitational. She took second in the Division 3 race at the Stanford Invitational.

Buchholz has volunteered locally on behalf of the Key Club and the Rotary International's Interact Club, a youth-empowerment program. "Carissa is a next-level athlete," said South Tahoe coach Kathleen Sheehan. "Her form is effortless and her fire is unstoppable. She digs deep at every practice because she knows that's where she wins races. She's an inspiration to watch."

Buchholz has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her 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.

Buchholz joins Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Alexis Melendrez (2017-18, Spanish Springs High School), Samantha King-Shaw (2016-17, Reed High School), Alexis Gourrier (2015-16, Centennial High School), Skyler Flora (2014-15, Tahoe Truckee High School), and Sydney Badger (2013-14, Centennial 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," Buchholz 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.