

HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARIZONA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 11, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced **Leo Daschbach of Highland High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Daschbach is the second Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Highland 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 Daschbach as Arizona’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 February, Daschbach joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park High School, Ill.), Donn Cabral (2007-08, Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury, Conn.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-10, 137-pound junior raced to second place at the Division 1 state championship meet this past season with a time of 16:06.99, leading the Hawks to a second-place finish as a team. Daschbach won the Sectional championships, the District championships, the Doug Conley Invitational, the Desert Solstice Invitational and the King of the Mountain Invitational during the 2018 campaign. He placed 19th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships.

Daschbach has volunteered locally on behalf of youth soccer programs. “Leo’s work ethic and dedication to improvement is head and shoulders over most athletes his age,” said Highland coach David Montgomery. “He’s a team leader and team player, and he always sets the bar high.”

Daschbach has maintained a 4.03 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior season 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. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Daschbach joins Gatorade Arizona Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Rylan Stubbs (2017-18, Campo Verde High School), Manuel Olivo-Quinones (2016-17, Buena High School), D. J. Harris (2015-16, Desert Vista High School), Carlos Villarreal (2014-15, Rio Rico High School), and Nathan Rodriguez (2013-14, Corona del Sol 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,” Daschbach has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He 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.

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