

THE BOLLES SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE FLORIDA 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 **Charles Hicks of The Bolles School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Hicks is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from The Bolles 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 Hicks as Florida'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, Hicks 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, 136-pound senior raced to his second consecutive Class 2A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:29.2, leading the Bulldogs to the state title as a team. Hicks won the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 15:04.5 and placed 14th nationally at the NXN Final, earning All-American status. He also broke the tape at the Manhattan Invitational, the Region 1 championships, the Alligator Lake Invitational and the Bale-n-Trail Cross Country Original, while taking fourth at the prestigious Great American Cross Country Festival.

Also a talented musician, Hicks has volunteered locally on behalf of charity road races and a summer camp for underprivileged children. "Charles Hicks is the main cog driving the culture change and belief of what our team could accomplish in cross country," said Bolles coach Mike Rivera. "Individually, he has an inner drive which is second to none. He's able to set a goal, focus on the goal and do everything that's required over several months to reach his goal."

Hicks has maintained a 4.24 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Stanford 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. 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.

Hicks joins Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Michael Phillips (2017-18, Chiles High School), Caleb Pottorff (2016-17, Lincoln Park Academy), Steven Cross (2015-16, Merritt Island High School), Sukhi Khosla (2014-15, Leon High School), and Nick Diaz (2013-14, Miami Sunset Senior 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," Hicks 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.