

HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Keeton Thornsberry of Holy Cross High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Thornsberry is the second Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Holy Cross 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 Thornsberry as Kentucky'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, Thornsberry 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 6-foot-1, 145-pound senior won the Class A state meet for a second-straight year this past season with a time of 15:46.39, breaking the tape 22.92 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Cougars to the state team title. Thornsberry took 27th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships. A three-time state champion, he did not lose to an in-state competitor all year.

An intern at a local pediatrician's office, Thornsberry is the president of the Holy Cross High School National Honor Society. He has volunteered locally with a youth ministry and at the St. Joseph Orphanage in Cincinnati. "Keeton is driven, demanding of self and others, confident in his abilities and thorough in his approach to his sport," said Jud Bachler, head coach of Holy Cross High School. "He is the cream of the crop in Kentucky high school cross country."

Thornsberry has maintained a weighted 4.40 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Two-time winner Thornsberry joins Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Yared Nuguse (2016-17, duPont Manual High School), Cole Dowdy (2015-16, South Oldham High School), Ethan Shuley (2014-15, Highlands High School), and Patrick Gregory (2013-14, Butler Traditional 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," Thornsberry 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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