

BROTHER MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE LOUISIANA 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 **Hunter Appleton of Brother Martin High School** as its **2018-19 Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Appleton is the first Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Brother Martin 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 Appleton as Louisiana'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, Appleton 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-8, 135-pound senior won the LHSAA 5A individual state championship this past season, breaking the tape on the 3-mile course with a time of 17:59.40 and leading the Crusaders to a second-place finish as a team. Appleton clocked the fastest 3-mile (a personal-best 14:52.61) and—by 42.01 seconds—the fastest 5K (a personal-best 15:32.00) by a Louisiana runner last fall. He won seven of the eight races during the 2018 campaign and was also the state's top finisher at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championships, crossing the line in 17th with a time of 16:25.09.

A National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist, Appleton is a member of the Mu Alpha Theta mathematics honor society. He serves as a school ambassador for incoming and visiting students and has participated in the Brother Martin Literary Rally. "Hunter Appleton is very simply the most motivated and responsible student-athlete I've ever had the pleasure of working with," said Brother Martin High School head coach Drew Haro. "His natural abilities coupled with his work ethic make for a combination found very rarely in young people his age. Hunter's external achievements and accolades are simply tangible signs of the successes he has already reached internally. If he'd never achieved these accolades, he would still be the same excellent young man that he already is."

Appleton has maintained a weighted 4.32 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Colorado 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.

Appleton joins Gatorade Louisiana Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year Adam Wise (2017-18, Fontainebleau High School), Eric Coston (2016-17, St. Paul's School), Devyn Keith (2015-16 & 2014-15, John Curtis Christian School) and Zachary Albright (2013-14, Saint Paul's 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," Appleton 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.

###