

**CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE
YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 27, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Riley Stewart of Cherry Creek High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Stewart is the second Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Cherry Creek 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 Stewart as Colorado'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, Stewart 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-11 sophomore raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:12.3, leading the Bruins to second place as a team. Stewart won the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships in 17:03.73 and finished 31st nationally at the NXN Final. She placed sixth at the Foot Locker Cross Country Midwest Regional championships and 17th at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. Stewart also broke the tape first at the Roy Griak Invitational and the Region 1 championships.

Stewart has volunteered locally on behalf of public park clean-up initiatives. "I've coached athletes for the past 16 years and I've had very few who are as talented as Riley Stewart," said Ethan Dusto, head coach at Cherry Creek High. "None of them have had the same combination of talent, hard work and humility that she exhibits."

Stewart has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 and 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.

Stewart joins recent Gatorade Colorado Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Quinn McConnell (2018-19, Peak to Peak Charter School), Jenna Fitzsimmons (2017-18, Mountain Vista High School), Brie Oakley (2016-17, Grandview High School), and Katie Rainsberger (2015-16 & 2014-15, Air Academy High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Stewart 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.