

**ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 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 **Meredith Gotzman of St. John's College High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade District of Columbia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Gotzman is the first Gatorade District of Columbia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from St. John's College 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 Gotzman as District of Columbia'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, Gotzman 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-5 freshman raced to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference individual championship this past season with a time of 19:02. Gotzman also earned victories at the Landon Invitational, the Pacers Running DCXC Invitational and the Varsity B race at the Manhattan Invitational. She took second at the D.C. Interscholastic Athletic Association championships and finished 22nd at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships.

An altar server at her church, Gotzman has volunteered locally on behalf of youth basketball programs. "Meredith has a special talent and cultivates it with hard work and dedication on a daily basis," said St. John's coach Desmond Dunham. "It's been an amazing experience to witness her maturity and growth as a leader. She ranks among the best student-athletes that I've coached over the past 22 years."

Gotzman has maintained a B average in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Gotzman joins recent Gatorade District of Columbia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Claire Wigglesworth (2018-19, Woodrow Wilson High School), Page Lester (2017-18 & 2016-17, National Cathedral School), and Taylor Knibb (2015-16, Sidwell Friends School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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