

**BISHOP DWENGER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 **Erin Strzelecki of Bishop Dwenger High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Strzelecki is the first Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bishop Dwenger 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 Strzelecki as Indiana'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, Strzelecki 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-7 senior raced to the individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:22.9. Strzelecki finished fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships and placed 11th nationally at the NXN Final, earning All-American honors. She also broke the tape at the Regional and Semi-State championships, as well as the New Haven Invitational, the Penn Invitational and the Marion Invitational.

A devoted member of her church community, Strzelecki has volunteered locally on behalf of a women's care center and a Vacation Bible School. "Erin is a hard-working and self-motivated athlete, and she has grown so much over the past four years," said Bishop Dwenger coach Thomas Crum. "She was determined to be one of the best in the state of Indiana and the nation this year and she accomplished both—second fastest girl in state meet history, and the second Midwest runner at the Nike Cross Nationals."

Strzelecki has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Strzelecki joins recent Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Emma Wilson (2018-19 & 2017-18, Greencastle High School), Tyler Schwartz (2016-17, DeKalb High School), Sarah Leinheiser (2015-16, Carmel High School) and Anna Rohrer (2014-15, Mishawaka High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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