

**HELENA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Kylie Hartnett of Helena High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Hartnett is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Helena 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 Hartnett as Montana’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, Hartnett 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-4 sophomore won the Class AA state meet this past season with a time of 17:49.68, breaking the tape 14.61 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Bengals to a third-place finish as a team. Hartnett, who also won the multi-state Mountain West Classic, took 10th at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships and finished 62nd at the NXN Final.

Hartnett has volunteered locally as a youth running coach. “Kylie is a tough competitor,” said Sarah Lord, head coach of Billings Senior High. “What makes Kylie stand out is her fierce determination to improve. Winning or not, she was always determined to push herself to be her best.”

Hartnett has maintained a 3.86 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.

Hartnett joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Tiahna Vladoic (2018-19 & 2016-17, Billings Senior High School), Camila Noe (2017-18, Bozeman High School), Annie Hill (2015-16, Glacier High School) and Makena Morley (2014-15, Bigfork High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade’s cause marketing platform “Play it Forward,” Hartnett 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.

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