

RAWLINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WYOMING 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 **Sydney Thorvaldson of Rawlins High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Thorvaldson is the first Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rawlins 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 Thorvaldson as Wyoming'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, Thorvaldson 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 state's two-time returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-4 junior won the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships for a second-straight year with a time of 16:50.6, breaking the tape 15.2 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. Thorvaldson also earned All-American honors for a third straight year with her third-place finish at the Nike Cross Nationals Finals, just one second behind the winner. She won the Class 3A state meet with a course-record time of 17:32.7, leading the Outlaws to a fifth-place finish as a team.

A member of the Rawlins High student council and National Honor Society, Thorvaldson has volunteered locally on behalf of community beautification projects and has donated her time as a teacher's aide at her church. "I have watched Sydney run since she was in seventh grade," said Ashley Rousseau, head coach of Pine Bluffs High. "It has been fantastic to see her grow and improve year after year. Sydney has a passion for the sport. No one likes running, but this girl does."

Thorvaldson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Three-time winner Thorvaldson joins Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Anna Gibson (2016-17, Jackson Hole High School), Calbi Ausmann (2015-16, Newcastle High School) and Karli Piaia (2014-15, Rock Springs High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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