

**MAUI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Hunter Shields of Maui High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Shields is the first Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Maui 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 Shields as Hawaii's best high school boys cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in February, Shields 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 returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-10, 135-pound junior won the state meet this past season with a time of 16:15.60, breaking the tape 3.87 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Sabers to a second-place finish as a team. The 2019 Maui Interscholastic League Runner of the Year, Shields won five of nine races and finished as runner-up three times in 2019.

Shields has volunteered locally with the Maui Humane Society and as a youth sports camp counselor. "I watched Hunter and his preparation for each race was very sound," said Dave Kanneurk, head coach of Kihei Charter School. "Hunter was all business. Hunter's passion for improvement and love for competition is what has made him a strong runner."

Shields has maintained a weighted 3.89 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Two-time winner Shields joins Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Colby Otero (2017-18, Kalaheo High School), Connor Lehl (2016-17, Punahou School), and Kaeo Kruse (2015-16 & 014-15), Kamehameha Schools-Kapalama High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Shields has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of his choosing. He 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.