

**LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE INDIANA 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 Gabriel Sanchez of Lowell High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Indiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Sanchez is the first Gatorade Indiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lowell 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 Sanchez as Indiana'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, Sanchez 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-8, 128-pound senior raced to the individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:28.7. Sanchez also broke the tape at the Dave Walker Invitational, the New Prairie Invitational, the Sectional championships, the Regional championships and the Northwest Crossroads Conference championships in 2019. He finished eighth at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships.

Sanchez has volunteered locally on behalf of his school's peer-mentoring program. "Gabriel has the greatest range of any runner I've ever coached," said Lowell coach Jacob Rakoczy. "He's a truly gifted athlete and an outstanding individual."

Sanchez has maintained a weighted 4.31 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Indiana 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.

Sanchez joins recent Gatorade Indiana Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Cole Hocker (2018-19, Cathedral High School), Matthew Schadler (2017-18, Reitz Memorial High School), Curtis Eckstein (2016-17, Oldenburg Academy), and Ben Veatch (2015-16 & 2014-15, Carmel High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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