

**PLEASANT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 Max Murphy of Pleasant Valley High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Murphy is the second Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Pleasant Valley 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 Murphy as Iowa'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, Murphy 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-11, 130-pound senior won the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 15:29.3, leading the Spartans to a second-place finish as a team. Murphy took eighth at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational in Minnesota and he finished fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, qualifying for the national NXN Final where he placed 112th.

Murphy has volunteered locally at an animal shelter and he has donated his time on behalf of multiple local running events. "I've watched Max Murphy improve every year," said Dave Terronez, head coach of Bettendorf High. "His progress this season was awesome. He is humble and motivated as well as a tenacious competitor."

Murphy has maintained a weighted 4.11 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Iowa 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.

Murphy joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Tim Sindt (2018-19 & 2017-18, Ankeny High School), Sam Schillinger (2016-17, Cedar Falls High School), Ryan Schweizer (2015-16, Dowling Catholic High School) and Thomas Pollard (2014-15, Gilbert High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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