

**CALVERT HALL COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MARYLAND BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (February 10, 2020) — In its 35<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Owen Johnson of Calvert Hall College High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Johnson is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Calvert Hall College 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 Johnson as Maryland'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, Johnson 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-7, 125-pound senior won the Maryland Independent Athletic Association Conference A state meet this past season with a time of 16:20.9, breaking the tape 19.4 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Cardinals to a first-place finish as a team. Johnson took 13th at the Foot Locker Northeast Regional championships, and he was undefeated against in-state competition in 2019.

A Peer Educator at Calvert Hall, Johnson teaches incoming freshmen about healthy decision-making. He has volunteered locally at a food bank and as a lifeguard. "Owen is extremely aggressive and fearless," said Jose Albornoz, head coach of Loyola Blakefield. "His biggest asset, besides his speed and strength, is his confidence. He typically has little doubt that he will win."

Johnson has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Georgetown University 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.

Johnson joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Obsaa Feda (2018-19, Northwood High School), Dalton Hengst (2017-18 & 2016-17, McDonogh School), Eric Walz (2015-16, Dulaney High School) and Diego Zarate (2014-15, Northwest High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Johnson 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](http://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](http://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).