

**LA PORTE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TEXAS 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 Ryan Schoppe of La Porte High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year. Schoppe is the first Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from La Porte 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 Schoppe as Texas' 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, Schoppe 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, 140-pound senior raced to the Class 6A individual state championship this past season with a state-record time of 14:14.02, which ranks as the second-fastest 5K time in U.S. prep history. Schoppe also won the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional championship in 15:06.1 and finished 15th nationally at the NXN Final, earning All-American honors in the process. He broke the tape at the Region 3 championships, the District 21 championships, the Bulldog Invitational and the Deer Park Invitational in 2019.

A devoted member of his church community, Schoppe has volunteered locally on behalf of a food bank and a youth track program. "Ryan is a special kind of athlete that a coach may only see once in a career," said La Porte coach Zach Johnson. "He has a relentless work ethic and a passion for running that I've never seen in a student-athlete."

Schoppe has maintained a weighted 4.86 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Oklahoma State 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.

Schoppe joins recent Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year Graydon Morris (2018-19 & 2017-18, Aledo High School), Reed Brown (2016-17 & 2015-16, Carroll Senior High School), and Carter Blunt (2014-15, Independence High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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