

**JOHN HERSEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Josh Methner of John Hersey High School as its 2019-20 Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Methner is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from John Hersey 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 Methner as Illinois's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in July, Methner joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2013-14 & 2014-15, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-8, 130-pound senior clocked a time of 9:08.18 in the 3200-meter run this past winter, which ranked as the nation's No. 15 performance among prep competitors during the 2020 indoor season. The state's reigning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year, Methner won a national title at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in December and took second at the Nike Cross Nationals Final. He also won an outdoor track championship in the 3200 at the 2019 Class 3A state meet.

Methner has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's youth group. "Josh is an outstanding, once-in-a-career kind of kid to coach, but he's an even better person and teammate," said Hersey distance coach Kevin Young. "His progress through his high school career looked easy, but that's because of his daily commitment to the craft and his team. He always did the little things to ensure that he got every last bit out of his experience in high school."

Methner has maintained a weighted 3.89 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame.

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 & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Methner joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Track & Field Athletes of the Year Marcellus Moore (2018-19, Plainfield North High School), Marcellus Moore (2017-18, Plainfield North High School), Cameron Ruiz (2016-17, Lakes Community High School), Sean Torpy (2015-16, Carl Sandburg High School), Ja'Mari Ward (2014-15, Cahokia High School), and Ja'Mari Ward (2013-14, Cahokia High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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.

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