

**CONARD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 15, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Gavin Sherry of Conard High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Sherry is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Conard 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 Sherry as Connecticut's best high school boys cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in April, Sherry joins an elite alumni association of 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-6, 130-pound junior won the Northeast High School Club Championships this past season with a time of 15:13.2. Connecticut's returning Gatorade Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, Sherry also took second at the East Coast Championships in 15:40.5.

A talented trombonist, Sherry has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple community service initiatives. "Gavin was able to balance the limitations on practices and competitions with his trademark drive and the enjoyment of challenging himself," said Conard coach Ron Knapp. "As his coach, it was extremely rewarding to watch Gavin seize the unique opportunities to improve himself in this vastly different season."

Sherry has maintained a 4.36 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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 & 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Sherry joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Matthew Farrell (2018-19, Loomis Chaffee School), Drew Thompson (2017-18, Fairfield College Preparatory School), and Zakeer Ahmad (2016-17, Staples High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Sherry has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Sherry is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$2.7 million across 1,117 organizations.

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.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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