

**TATNALL SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE 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 Declan McDonnell of Tatnall School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. McDonnell is the second Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Tatnall 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 McDonnell as Delaware'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, McDonnell 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 6-foot-2, 145-pound senior raced to the Division 2 individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:51.8, leading the Hornets to the state title as a team. McDonnell also won the Delaware Sports Club High School Open and the St. Mark's Invitational.

A devoted member of his church youth group, McDonnell has volunteered locally feeding the homeless and assisting with clothing donation drives. "Declan McDonnell ranks up there with the finest athletes I've ever coached," said Tatnall coach Patrick Castagno. "His approach to hard work is legendary in our program. There's never been a race or a workout where he hasn't run with heart and pushed the limit."

McDonnell has maintained a B average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Monmouth 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 & 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.

McDonnell joins recent Gatorade Delaware Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Andrew Avila (2019-20, Charter School of Wilmington), and Connor Nisbet (2018-19, 2017-18 & 2016-17, Wilmington Friends School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," McDonnell has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. McDonnell 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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