

**HERSCHER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 Drew Rogers of Herscher High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Rogers is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Herscher 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 Rogers as Illinois'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, Rogers 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-11, 127-pound junior won the Division 1 ShaZam Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:34.4. Rogers also broke the tape at the sectional and regional championships, along with the Kankakee All Area Invitational. He took 10th at the national XC Town USA Meet of Champions.

Rogers has volunteered locally on behalf of his church's youth group and Feed My Starving Children. "Drew has reached every achievement he's put in front of himself, and it's only made him hungrier to reach even new heights," said Herscher coach Rob Grosso. "He is both the most competitive kid and the most humble kid I have ever worked with."

Rogers has maintained a 3.83 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.

Rogers joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Josh Methner (2019-20 & 2018-19, John Hersey High School), Danny Kilrea (2017-18, Lyons Township High School), and Dylan Jacobs (2016-17, Carl Sandburg High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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