

**MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 Daniel Harkin of Manhattan High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Harkin is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Manhattan 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 Harkin as Kansas'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, Harkin 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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1, 175-pound senior distance talent won the KSHSAA 6A state title this past season, breaking the tape in 16:17.20—18.8 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor—and leading the Indians to a second-place finish as a team. The winner of three consecutive Centennial League titles, Harkin captured his second straight crown in the state's largest class and did so racing into the teeth of a stiff southerly wind.

An elite USTA age-group talent, Harkin has donated his time providing free tennis lessons and instruction to young players in his community. Also a piano student, he is a member of the MHS choir and has volunteered locally on behalf of road races. "Daniel is a fierce competitor," said Matt Swedlund, head coach at Washburn Rural High. "From the time he arrived on the scene, he made it known that he would be a force to be reckoned with. Despite his clear aptitude for cross country, he has always had a kind and unassuming demeanor. Daniel put up fast times all year, but he was always particularly dangerous in championship races, where he consistently found his way to the top of the podium. He's had an outstanding high school career."

Harkin has maintained a 4.15 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Kansas Wesleyan 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.

Two-time winner Harkin joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Ethan Marshall (2018-19 & 2017-18, St. Thomas Aquinas High School), and Will Cole (2016-17, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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