

**NORTH STAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEBRASKA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 15, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Liem Chot of North Star High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Chot is the first Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from North Star 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 Chot as Nebraska'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, Chot 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-4, 180-pound senior won the Division A state meet for a third-straight year this past season with a time of 15:37.9, breaking the tape 5.8 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Navigators to a fourth-place finish as a team. Chot won all eight of his in-state races in 2020, and beginning with his sophomore year, he won 22 of 25 races against Nebraska competition.

Chot fled The Sudan with his two brothers and moved to Nebraska, where he was adopted by his older sister. He has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and food bank, and he has donated his time with local road races as well as on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Liem is very humble and works very hard," said Scott Hirschert, head coach of Grand Island High. "He has put in the time. The meets I have seen, he ran very well."

Chot has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Temple University beginning 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 Chot joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Ben Arens (2018-19, Ainsworth High School), Jake Ralston (2017-18, Papillion-La Vista South High School), and Seth Hirsch (2016-17, Millard West High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Chot has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Chot 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](http://www.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).

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