

**LA SALLE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Jack McLoughlin of La Salle Academy as its 2020-21 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. McLoughlin is the second Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 McLoughlin as Rhode Island'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, McLoughlin 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, 128-pound senior won the state meet with a time of 15:27.32, breaking the tape 5.84 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Rams to a first place finish as a team. McLoughlin won three of the five races he entered and took second twice. He finished in the top four at the state meet three times in his prep running career and he placed 35th at the 2019 Nike Cross Nationals.

An Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts of America, McLoughlin has volunteered locally at Franklin Farm in Cumberland, providing supplies for a food bank, and he has donated his time with Toys for Tots and Soles for Souls. "Jack endures pain so that his success can be one shared with fellow teammates," said Ken Skelly, head coach of La Salle Academy. "In a season of unknowns, Jack was laser-focused. In a season of hurdles, Jack was ready for the hand he was dealt. In a season with less of the glitter of big events, Jack found a way to make history."

McLoughlin has maintained a weighted A average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at Georgetown 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 McLoughlin joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jack McMahon (2018-19, Bishop Hendricken High School), Jeffery Pedersen (2017-18, East Greenwich High School), and D.J. Principe (2016-17, La Salle Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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