

**SIoux FALLS CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 Isaac Davelaar of Sioux Falls Christian High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Davelaar is the first Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Sioux Falls Christian 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 Davelaar as South Dakota'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, Davelaar 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, 140-pound sophomore won eight of the 10 races he entered this past season. Davelaar finished second at the Class A state meet in a snowstorm, leading the Chargers to a first place finish as a team. He was the DAK XII Conference and Region 2A champion, winning both races by more than 30 seconds. Davelaar set a school record with a time of 15:41.0 at the Roe Granger Invitational and set school records at all nine courses where he competed.

Davelaar has volunteered locally at a homeless shelter and a resource center for unemployed and under-employed individuals. He has also donated his time with Kids Against Hunger and on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "When the worldwide pandemic put an end to the spring track season, Isaac set his focus on the 2020 cross country season," said Luke Vander Leest, head coach of Sioux Falls Christian High. "After a solid spring and summer of training, Isaac quickly established himself as one of the top runners in the state."

Davelaar has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior 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.

Davelaar joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Andrew Lauer (2019-20, Lincoln High School), Aaron Ryan (2018-19, Aberdeen Central High School), and Derick Peters (2017-18 & 2016-17, West Central High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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