

**LINCOLN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Andrew Smithwick** of **Lincoln Christian School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Smithwick is the second Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln Christian 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 Smithwick as Oklahoma'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 February, Smithwick joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Parker Wolfe (2020-21, Cherry Creek High School, Greenwood Village, Colo.), Nico Young (2019-20, Newbury Park High School, Newbury Park, Calif.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.).

The 6-foot-4, 175-pound senior raced to victory at the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 15:28.6, leading the Bulldogs to the team title. Smithwick added a number of other impressive showings, clocking the fastest time by an Oklahoma runner in finishing second at the OSU Cowboy Jamboree. His personal-best time of 15:00.00 earned him seventh place in the El Caliente race at the prestigious Chile Pepper Festival, where he was again the state's fastest runner.

Smithwick has volunteered locally as part of the Chick-Fil-A Leadership Academy, a youth empowerment group that discusses controversial topics and brainstorms solutions. Each summer, he donates many hours on behalf of Global Ventures, a nonprofit ministry group that performs service-mission work in a variety of low-income countries. "Andrew Smithwick demonstrated strong year-over-year improvement to earn the Class 4A state crown," said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. "Even more impressive was the Lincoln Christian senior's willingness to seek out national caliber competition, which he backed up with state-best finishes at the Chile Pepper Festival and the OSU Cowboy Jamboree."

Smithwick has maintained a weighted 4.04 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Oral Roberts 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Smithwick joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Players of the Year A.J. Antonelli (2021-22, Deer Creek High School), Gabe Simonsen (2020-21 & 2019-20, Mustang High School), and Sam Bass (2018-19, Casady School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.