

## **WASILLA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 21, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Hailee Giacobbe of Wasilla High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Player of the Year.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation's best high school athletes for their excellence in sport, academics and community. The award recognizes Giacobbe as Alaska's best high school girls cross country athlete, and she joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, CA), Katelyn Tuohy (2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20, North Rockland High School, NY) and Jane Hedengren (2024-25, Timpview High School, UT).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-1 junior won her second straight Division 1 state meet this past season with a time of 19:18.8, breaking the tape 12 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Warriors to a ninth-place finish as a team. The two-time Division 1 Region III Runner of the Year, she was the top Alaskan finisher at the Nike Cross Northwest Regional Championships for a second straight year.

Giacobbe has volunteered locally with AKtive Soles, a running store, and as a youth running coach. "The weight of a very successful prior season, including individual championships in both state and regionals, comes with a big target on your back in every race," said Leslie Varys, head coach of Wasilla High School. "Hailee handled the pressure with grace and success. I attribute a big part of her success to her focus on all of her teammates this year. Instead of Hailee's success distancing her from her team, it united them."

Giacobbe has maintained a weighted 4.03 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one state winner from each of the 50 states and Washington D.C., in 12 different sports: football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, baseball, softball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls track & field. In total, 610 high school athletes are honored each year. From the pool of state winners, one national winner is selected in each of the 12 sports. 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 winners in each sport.

As part of Gatorade's commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$6.4 million in grants to winners across more than 2,200 organizations.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at [x.com/Gatorade](https://www.x.com/Gatorade).

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