

ROGERS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ARKANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 21, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Lilly Beshears of Rogers High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Arkansas 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 Beshears as Arkansas' 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 5-foot-8 senior won the Class 6A state title this past season, breaking the tape with a time of 17:29.44 for her second straight AHSAA championship. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, Beshears also took 5th at the Brooks South XC Championships to earn First Team All-Region honors before advancing to Brooks nationals, where she finished 29th. She grabbed Second Team All-Region recognition with a ninth-place finish at the Nike Cross Nationals South Regional Championships. She was the state's top finisher at both regional meets as well as the national championships.

A member of the Mu Alpha Theta mathematics honor society, Beshears belongs to her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes and its Literacy Legends Club. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Paralympics, the Fellowship Bible Church, Pedal It Forward, the Husky Hoedown event and the Comets youth soccer team. She has also donated her time as a road race and track meet worker and as part of the City of Rogers Tornado Cleanup. "Lilly Beshears showed real guts by returning from a back injury that cost her two months of training to defend her state title and take home dual All-Region honors," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack.

Beshears has maintained a weighted 4.26 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at Brigham Young University 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 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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