

LYME-OLD LYME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE CONNECTICUT 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 Chase Gilbert of Lyme-Old Lyme High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Connecticut 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 Gilbert as Connecticut'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 5-foot-4 senior won the Open state meet this past season with a time of 17:50.08, breaking the tape 14.68 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. Gilbert also won her fourth straight Class S state meet in 17:51.94, leading the Wildcats to a third-place finish as a team. She earned First Team All-Region honors by placing eighth at the Brooks Northeast Regional Championships and took 30th at the Brooks Cross Country Championships.

The president of her high school class, Gilbert has volunteered locally as a mentor and coach with Run Like A Girl. "Chase has been a dominating runner over the last four years, always running her best in the biggest races of the season," said Matt Diglio, head coach of Haddam-Killingworth High School. "While she's a talented athlete, Chase has also impressed me with her modesty and humility. She's the total package."

Gilbert has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Virginia 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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