

BOWDON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Averil Lowen of Bowdon High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Georgia 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 Lowen as Georgia'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-8 junior won her third straight GHSA Class 1A Division 2 state title this past season in a course record time of 16:56.2. Lowen set five meet records and five course records during last fall. Her biggest triumphs came via wins at the Great American Cross Country Festival and the NXN Southeast Regional.

Lowen has volunteered locally on behalf of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She also has donated her time mentoring members of a middle school team. "Competing as the lone member of the school's girls cross country team in a city of 2,500 residents, Averil Lowen has elevated her small-town talents to prodigious levels," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "Making her debut on the national prep stage this season, she earned All-American status at both national championships while remaining unbeaten against in-state rivals, shattering numerous course records in the process. She's the best female distance talent the Peach State has ever seen."

Lowen has maintained a 4.00 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 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.

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