

## **PORLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE 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 Nora Schmidt of Portland High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Maine 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 Schmidt as Maine'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-2 freshman broke the tape at the Class A state meet this past season, leading the Bulldogs to the team title. Also the Southern Maine regional champion, Schmidt scorched her way to a personal-best time of 17:47.78 to win the Maine XC Festival of Champions. She clocked the state's fastest 5K last fall and won six of seven races at that distance. She was also the age-group champion in the 2K steeplechase at the 2025 National Junior Olympic T&F Championships.

The treasurer for Portland High School's Class of 2029, she has volunteered locally on behalf of Best Buddies International. She has also donated her time as a middle school track coach and meet official in addition to participating in Portland High School's Women's Rights Club, Outing Club and Ski Club. "Schmidt ran the state's fastest 5K, won a state title and her only loss was to a teammate by 3/10ths just five days after she ripped a PR that beat her previous best by more than 14 seconds," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "She was clearly the class of the state in 2025 and has a bright career in front of her."

Schmidt has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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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