

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MARYLAND 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 Amelia Avila of Our Lady of Good Counsel High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Maryland 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 Avila as Maryland'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-5 junior earned First Team All-Region honors this past season by finishing fourth at both the Nike Cross Southeast Regional and Brooks Northeast Regional championships. Avila also took 20th at Brooks Cross Country Championships and 26th at the Nike Cross Nationals. She set a course record in winning October's Class 2A Maryland Private School State Championships with a time of 17:19.6, breaking the tape 1:00.8 ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Falcons to a third-place finish as a team. She won the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Varsity A Championships as well, clocking a course-record time of 17:49.6.

An avid artist, Avila's Maryland "I voted sticker" was one of three designs selected in a public contest and is still used in state elections. She has volunteered locally with the Our Lady of Good Counsel Falcon Welcome Team for new students, and has donated her time to multiple community service initiatives as her school's Golden Service Hour coordinator. "Amelia had a spectacular season and is fun to watch," said Jill Tennyson, head coach of St. Mary's Ryken High School. "She makes it look easy. She has always been a strong runner, but this past fall, everything seemed to click."

Avila has maintained a weighted 4.53 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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