

## **WESTFORD ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Abby Hennessey of Westford Academy is the 2025-26 Gatorade Massachusetts 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 Hennessey as Massachusetts' 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-10 senior won the MIAA Meet of Champions this past season, breaking the tape in 17:15.2 and leading the Ghosts to fifth place as a team. Hennessey scorched her way to a high-profile win at the Brooks XC Northeast Championships in late November, crossing the line in 16:47.30 to earn First Team All-Region honors. She followed that by becoming a First Team All-American with her fifth-place finish at the national Brooks XC Championships. Also the Division 1A state meet champ, she ran a personal-best last fall in only her second 5K race of the campaign, posting a 16:43.3 to win the MSTCA Bob Glennon Twilight Invitational.

An accomplished pianist and a teaching assistant in German at Westford Academy, Hennessey has volunteered locally on an extensive level with her church youth group. In addition to serving as a middle school youth running coach, she has also donated her time to City Reach in support of the unhoused. "Abby Hennessey had a breakout senior season in cross country after enjoying multiple All-State titles in track as a sophomore and junior," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "In her last chance to do so at 5K, she proved she was the Commonwealth's best."

Hennessey has maintained a weighted 4.24 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Washington 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://x.com/Gatorade).

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