

MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSISSIPPI 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 Alex Lee of Madison Central High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Mississippi 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 Lee as Mississippi'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 broke the tape at the Class 7A state meet this past season, leading the Jaguars to second place as a team. Now a two-time state champion, Lee was the state's top finisher at the Southern Showcase (9th) and clocked a personal-best time of 17:57.2 at October's Watson High School Classic. She recorded the state's fastest 5K among Mississippi girls last fall.

A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Leadership Team at her school, Lee is a member of the Madison Civinettes Service Group as well as the Bellwether Church Youth Group, and she was a youth small group leader at Pinelake Church. A member of her school's Beta Club, Upstanders Kindness Club and Student Athlete Leadership Team, she has volunteered as part of service-mission trips to Honduras and the Yakama Nation Reservation. An employee at Fleet Feet Jackson, she has also donated her time to the Quiet Waters Special Needs Ministry and Madison Countians Allied Against Poverty. "Anyone who was paying attention knows the race for Gatorade Player of the Year in Mississippi was incredibly close," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "I think Lee's large margin of victory at the state, her PR in the Watson Classic Gold Race and the fact she clocked the state's fastest 5K of 2025 are enough to put her over the top."

Lee has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Mississippi 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.

###