

SAUCON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Virginia Kraus of Saucon Valley High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Pennsylvania 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 Kraus as Pennsylvania'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 senior became the first four-time PIAA Class AA state champion in history with a meet record time of 17:48.0, breaking the tape 38 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. Kraus earned Second Team All-American honors with her 10th-place finish in the national Brooks XC Championships. She also took second at the Brooks Northeast XC Championships to earn First Team All-Region recognition.

Kraus has volunteered locally at the Center for Animal Health and Welfare, assisting staff in caring for homeless pets and finding new homes for them. She has also donated her time as a math tutor for Saucon Valley High School students and as an ice hockey coach at Try Hockey for Free in addition to building and maintaining trail systems on behalf of Valley Mountain Bikers. "The author of a near-perfect regular season, a state meet record and representing the state's top performer at nationals, Virginia Kraus remained Pennsylvania's dominant distance competitor for a second year running," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "She's going to be a force in the Ivy League sooner than later."

Kraus has maintained a weighted 4.5 GPA in the classroom. She will attend Dartmouth College this fall, where she will run for the cross country and track teams.

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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