

## **MENOMONIE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 Lauren McCalla of Menomonie High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Wisconsin 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 McCalla as Wisconsin'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-6 senior won the WIAA Division 1 state meet this past season with a class meet record time of 17:26.4, breaking the tape 15 seconds ahead of her next-nearest competitor in leading the Mustangs to a fourth-place team finish. A two-time First Team All-State selection, McCalla broke the state 5k record at the Old Abe Invite by clocking 16:52.0. She won 9 of her 13 races during the season, also placing 16th at the Brooks Cross Country Championships.

McCalla has volunteered locally as an instructor for Run N' Fun class each summer, working with middle school and elementary school students in building healthy activity habits. She has also donated her time with Mind Over Matter, a local non-profit initiative that organizes road races for the fundraising purpose of providing scholarships for underserved youth to attend summer camps. "Domination was the name of the game for Lauren McCalla, breaking both state and state meet records as part of an unbeaten season on Wisconsin soil," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack.

McCalla has maintained a 3.99 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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