

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE IDAHO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 13, 2026) — In its 41<sup>st</sup> year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Hyrum Tuft of Rocky Mountain High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Idaho Boys 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 Tuft as Idaho's best high school boys cross country athlete, and he joins an elite legacy that spans professional athletes and coaches to CEOs, such as Lukas Verzbicas (2009-10 & 2010-11, Carl Sandburg High School, IL) Edward Cheserek (2012-13, Saint Benedict's Preparatory School, NJ) and Charlie Vause (2024-25, Rio Rancho High School, NM).

The 5-foot-11, 150-pound senior won the IHSAA Class 6A state meet this past season with a meet-and-course-record time of 14:28.2, breaking the previous standard clocked by former teammate and a two-time Gatorade State Player of the Year Landon Heemeyer (2022-24). A Nike Cross Northwest Second Team All-Region selection and three-time All-State honoree, Tuft led the Grizzlies to a third-place team finish at the state meet. His four individual race victories also sparked team wins.

Tuft has volunteered locally working with Light the World Giving Machines, which provides vending kiosks that allow users to purchase items for those in need. He has also donated his time building beds for the underserved, visiting residents in a homeless rehabilitation center and delivering meals to refugee families. "Producing a near-perfect ledger racing on Idaho soil this past season, Hyrum Tuft's historic state meet performance slashed 10.6 seconds off the meet record, making Rocky Mountain High School the first school in the state history to have multiple cross country athletes win the Gatorade Player of the Year award," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack.

Tuft has maintained a weighted 4.09 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a college destination.

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://www.x.com/Gatorade).

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