

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MAINE BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 13, 2026) — In its 41st year celebrating the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Alex Gilbert of Freeport High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Maine 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 Gilbert as Maine'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-7, 130-pound senior broke the tape at the Class B state meet, leading the Falcons to second place as a team. Gilbert also won the seeded race at the Maine XC Festival of Champions and was the state's fastest competitor at both the New England XC Championships, where he took 14th to earn All-New England recognition, and the Brooks XC Northeast Regional (36th). He finished unbeaten against in-state runners last fall and his winning time at the Southern Maine Classic came in a personal-best 15:41.0 for 5K.

Gilbert has volunteered locally on behalf of the USATF summer youth track and field program and works as a customer service associate at L.L. Bean. He's also been a four-year fundraising participant with the WinterKids Downhill 24 ski event. As a member of his school's Mentorship Program, he meets with and guides underclassmen on a weekly basis. "Alex Gilbert would be a great choice," said Dave Dyer, a sports reporter for the Portland Press Herald. "He was the boys winner at Festival of Champions in addition to winning regional and state titles in Class B. There were some solid candidates in Maine, but he stands above the rest."

Gilbert has maintained an A-plus average in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Rhode Island 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 or follow us on social media on Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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