

PIONEER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Kamari Ronfeldt of Pioneer High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Michigan 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 Ronfeldt as Michigan'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-10, 135-pound junior broke the tape at both the MITCA Meet of Champions and the MHSAA LP Division 1 state meet, leading the Pioneers to second place as a team in the latter. Ronfeldt followed up with a third-place and First Team All-Region finish at both the NXN Midwest regionals, where he clocked a personal-best time of 14:43.4, and the Brooks Midwest regionals. Those performances headlined Pioneer's team finish of third at both meets. At NXN Nationals, he took 18th to clinch Third Team All-American honors. He concluded the year ranked No. 23 in the national Dyestat 100.

Founder and co-president of his school's health and wellness club, Ronfeldt has volunteered locally as a youth football coach for Ann Arbor's Community Education and Recreation program. Also a peer math tutor, he has fundraised for both Feeding American and Peoples Food Gathers. As a summer lifeguard, he delivers excess stock from the concession stand to the homeless. "Ronfeldt was the class of Michigan last fall and by a pretty wide margin," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack. "He won nine of 11 races at 5K and clocked six sub-15 times. In the championship months of November and December, he won his last two in-state races, then captured a pair of third-place finishes at two of the nation's premier regional meets and earned Third Team All-American status at Nike Cross Nationals."

Ronfeldt has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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](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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