

ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Jack McGovern of Rockhurst High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Missouri 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 McGovern as Missouri'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, 125-pound sophomore submitted a remarkable postseason following his win in the Class 5 state meet, which sparked the Hawklets to the team title this past season. McGovern finished fourth at the NXN Midwest Regional, coasting to nationals' qualification on the strength of that First Team All-Region showing. At Nike Cross Nationals, he took 10th to earn Second Team All-American status. McGovern also broke the tape in the Elite Varsity Race at the Gans Creek Classic, clocking a personal-best time of 14:44.7. He concluded the year ranked at No. 10 in both the national MileSplit50 and Dyestat 100 rankings.

A member of his school's Spanish and photography clubs as well as its chamber choir, McGovern has volunteered locally on behalf of the Young Men's Service League. Also a lector and altar server at St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, he operates his own lawn care and a trash and recycling business. "Jack McGovern ran four of his five fastest times of the fall after November 1st and proved himself to be the class of the state in 2025," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack. "Never finishing outside the top 10 in any of his nine races, he produced six wins, a second and a fourth."

McGovern has maintained a weighted 4.07 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior 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, Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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