

## KEENE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW HAMPSHIRE 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 Sullivan Sturtz of Keene High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade New Hampshire 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 Sturtz as New Hampshire'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-9, 145-pound senior broke the tape at the NHIAA Meet of Champions as well as the Division 1 state meet this past season, leading the Blackbirds to second and fourth-place team finishes, respectively. As the state's top finisher at the New England XC Championships, where he took fifth, Sturtz earned All-New England recognition prior to his Second Team All-Region showing at the Brooks XC Northeast event, where he crossed the line 16th. He clocked a personal-best time of 14:48.1 last fall in the Monadnock Moonlight Madness Varsity Race.

A competitive Nordic skier and Scholastic Art award-winner, Sturtz is a four-year member of the Student-Athlete Leadership Council at his school. He has volunteered locally as a youth track coach and has also donated his time at many community road race events as part of charitable fundraising efforts. "Sullivan Sturtz beat the other divisions' state champions two out of three times in the season-ending championship meets," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack. "He was the NHCC Runner of the Year and he was the class of the state last fall."

Sturtz has maintained a weighted 4.3 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Massachusetts Amherst 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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