

FAIRLESS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE OHIO 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 Brice Fuller of Fairless High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Ohio 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 Fuller as Ohio'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 sophomore's fastest all-divisions clocking to win the Division 3 state meet was just a precursor to further postseason success, capped by a top-25 finish at Nike Cross Nationals. Fuller took fifth at NXN Midwest in a personal-best time of 14:49.1 before crossing the line 22nd at nationals. A winner in six of his nine 5K races entering nationals, he managed a top-five finish in every one.

An aspiring Eagle Scout, Fuller has volunteered on behalf of the East Canton Church of God. He has also participated as an invited member of the exclusive Stark Youth Leadership Academy, which seeks to build skills in community engagement, teamwork and leadership. "In Brice Fuller, we could be looking at one of the premier high school distance runners in state history if he maintains his trajectory," said Mark Dwyer, MileSplit Associate Manager for Heartland States.

Fuller has maintained a 4.09 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](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.

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