

## LOWER MERION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 Nicholas Mazzeo of Lower Merion High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Pennsylvania 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 Mazzeo as Pennsylvania'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 6-foot-1, 165-pound senior won the New Balance RunningLane XC Championships race this past season with a time of 14:49.9. Mazzeo also took 14th at the national Brooks XC Championships to earn Third Team All-American honors. Having placed first or second in 10 of his 12 races last fall, he was runner-up at The Southern Showcase in a personal-best 14:10.1, clocking the third-fastest time in state history for 5K.

A member of the National Honor Society and his school band, Mazzeo has volunteered locally tutoring peers in various academic subjects on behalf of Writing Fellows and the ACE Scholars Program. He's also active in the Lower Merion Technology Student Association, one of the oldest, largest and most successful TSA chapters in the nation. "Nicholas Mazzeo's early-season showing at The Southern Showcase revealed a new layer of excellence we hadn't seen from him before," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "That high-profile experience undoubtedly helped ignite the fire for a strong season closing, culminating with his national title run at RunningLane."

Mazzeo has maintained a weighted 5.00 GPA in the classroom. He will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall, where he will run cross country and track.

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://www.x.com/Gatorade).

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