

PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 Sean Gray of Portsmouth High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Rhode Island 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 Gray as Rhode Island'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, 150-pound senior won the Nike Cross Northeast Regional Championships this past season with a time of 15:21.2. Gray went on to earn Third Team All-American honors by finishing 15th at Nike Cross Nationals in 15:23.6. He also won the Class B state meet, the Open State Meet and the New England Cross Country Championships, concluding the season as the nation's No. 12 competitor in the MileSplit50 rankings.

A member of his school's Photography Club and Yearbook Club, Gray has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through the Portsmouth Leadership Academy. "Sean has clearly demonstrated he's one of the great Rhode Island high school distance runners," said Mike Katz, head coach of Barrington High School. "I've seen him up close for nearly four years and you could not have asked for a nicer kid, respectful of his competition and obviously a very disciplined and hard-working athlete."

Gray has maintained a weighted 3.93 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Virginia 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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