

CAMAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WASHINGTON 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 Cohen Butler of Camas High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Washington 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 Butler as Washington'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, 135-pound senior won the WIAA Class 4A state title this past season, clocking a state record time of 14:47.9 and leading the Papermakers to a fourth-place finish as a team. Butler also won the Nike Cross Northwest Regional title with a course-record and personal-best 14:36.8, earning First Team All-Region honors and a bid to nationals, where he took 55th. He won the Nike Hole in the Wall Invitational and was the top Washington finisher at the prestigious Nike Portland XC meet, crossing the line in fourth.

Butler has volunteered locally with his church's Vacation Bible School, assisting with youth activities and supervision. He has also donated his time supporting school and community fundraising efforts in addition to helping to organize a shoe and sock drive for the Family & Community Resource Center. "Cohen Butler is a little like the 100-to-1 longshot that paid off," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "In his junior year, the only race he won was his season-opener and he finished 100th at Nike Cross regionals. As a senior, Butler won every race he ran on Washington soil and broke the tape at regionals. A leader within the Camas program for years, Cohen led the entire state last fall."

Butler has maintained a 3.76 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Washington 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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