

## **STAR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE WYOMING 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 Colton Cranney of Star Valley High School is the 2025-26 Gatorade Wyoming 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 Cranney as Wyoming'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-3, 135-pound senior broke the tape at the Class 4A state meet this past season with an all-class best clocking of 15:59.8, leading the Braves to second place as a team. Cranney was the state's fastest competitor at the Brooks XC West Regional, where he finished ninth to earn First Team All-Region recognition, as well as the NXN Northwest Regional (26th) and the national Brooks XC Championships (37th). He finished unbeaten against in-state runners last fall and his winning time at the The Mook Invite came in a personal-best 14:50.2 for 5K.

A member of his school's chamber orchestra, Cranney has volunteered locally for a foodbank and on behalf of the elderly in addition to serving in multiple leadership roles within his church congregation's youth group. "Cranney ran a challenging race schedule and finished unbeaten against in-state runners," said Rich Gonzalez, editor of PrepCalTrack. "In seven meets from August through October, he earned four wins and didn't finish lower than fourth. He was the class of Wyoming last fall."

Cranney has maintained a 3.99 GPA in the classroom. He will participate in a Latter Day Saints missionary program beginning 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://www.x.com/Gatorade).

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