

**OAKWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OHIO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 24, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Grace Hartman** of **Oakwood High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hartman is the second Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Oakwood High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Hartman as Ohio's best high school girls cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in February, Hartman joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11 & 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior won her second-straight Division 2 state meet title this past season, this time with a course-record time of 17:31.6. Hartman broke the tape 31 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and led the Lumberjacks to a seventh-place finish as a team. She finished 22nd at the Garmin Running Lane Cross Country Championships and placed 35th at the Eastbay Midwest Regional Championships.

Hartman has volunteered locally knitting caps for children at a homeless shelter, and she has donated her time as a lifeguard and as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Grace is a tall, strong and powerful runner," said Byron Kimmel, head coach of Tippecanoe High School. "She intimidated nearly every female runner in Division 2 and Division 1 in Ohio. She has been dominant for four years."

Hartman has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at North Carolina State University this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. 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 state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Hartman joins recent Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Taylor Ewert (2019-20 & 2018-19, Beavercreek High School) and Morgan Gigandet (2017-18, Troy High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Hartman has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Hartman is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

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 Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.