

CHUGIAK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ALASKA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 22, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Hannah Shaha of Chugiak High School is the 2023-24 Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Shaha is the second Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Chugiak High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Shaha as Alaska's best high school girls cross country player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Irene Riggs (2022-23, 2021-22 & 2020-21, Morgantown High School, Morgantown, W. Va.), Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, 2018-19 & 2017-18, North Rockland High School, Thiels, N.Y.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.)

The 5-foot-8 sophomore won the Division 1 state meet this past season with a time of 19:19.82, breaking the tape almost seven seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Mustangs to the team title. In her first year as a varsity competitor, Shaha won the Cook Inlet Conference Region IV Meet and took 14<sup>th</sup> in the Open Division race at the Nike Cross Northwest Regional Championships.

A violinist in the Chugiak Symphonic Orchestra, Shaha has volunteered locally with her school's T.E.A. club, which promotes recycling and caring for the environment. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "The progress that Hannah made between her freshman and sophomore seasons was both surprising and impressive," said Brian Kruchoski, head coach of Chugiak High School. "From not being a part of the varsity team in 2022 to becoming the state champion in 2023, she surprised even herself with her amazing progress and success."

Shaha has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior year of high school 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.

Shaha joins recent Gatorade Alaska Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Campbell Peterson (2022-23, Chugiak High School), Robyn Miller (2021-22, South Anchorage High School), Naomi Bailey (2020-21, West Valley High School), and Kendall Kramer (2019-20, West Valley High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 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 Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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