

MILLENNIUM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE ARIZONA 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 Landen LeBlond of Millennium High School is the 2023-24 Gatorade Arizona Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. LeBlond is the first Gatorade Arizona Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Millennium 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 LeBlond as Arizona’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-6 senior won the Division 2 state meet this past season with a time of 18:46.2, breaking the tape 56 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Tigers to a 12th-place finish as a team. LeBlond’s 17:43.8 clocking to win the Rojo Invitational ranked as the fastest 5K time by an Arizona prep girl in 2023. Winning nine of her 12 races, she took 17th at the RunningLane Championships and placed 37th at the Nike Cross Southwest Regional.

A two-year captain on the Millennium cross-country team, LeBlond has volunteered locally as an archivist with Health Occupations Students of America, producing a monthly newsletter and maintaining the program’s Instagram account. “Landen LeBlond mowed down in-state competition with impressive consistency this past fall, notching nine race victories on Arizona soil, including an all-class best clocking at the state meet,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “The University of Oregon signee capped her season with a Top 40 finish at the Nike Cross Southwest Regionals before securing Second Team All-America honors at the RunningLane Championships.”

LeBlond has maintained a 4.86 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to run on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

LeBlond joins recent Gatorade Arizona Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Lauren Ping (2022-23, 2021-22, 2020-21, & 2019-20 Desert Vista 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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