

PACE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Caroline Hood of Pace Academy is the 2023-24 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Hood is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Pace Academy.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Hood as Georgia'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 became the state's only prep girl to qualify for a national championship race this past season by taking fifth at the Nike Cross Southeast regional, crossing the line in 17:20.10 to clock the fastest time by a Georgia prep girl in that race's history. Hood took third at the Class 4A state meet, helping the Knights to the title. She also set a meet record in winning the OrthoWest Invitational with a time of 18:06.83 and won the Alexander/Asics Invitational in a personal-best 17:16.37.

Hood has volunteered extensively on behalf of the Agape Youth and Family Center in addition to serving as a counselor at Keeping Pace, a camp for underserved children. An officer in the Buckhead chapter of the National Charity League, she has also donated her time in association with Isdell Center for Global Leadership Council and as part of Lifeteen, a youth group at the Cathedral of Christ the King Catholic Church. "Caroline Hood really only hit one speed bump all season (at the state meet), but her landmark performance at Nike regionals a couple weeks later was a statement," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCal Track. "Her performances at other major invitationals throughout the season set her apart in Georgia."

Hood has maintained a 3.91 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to run on scholarship at Duke 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.

Hood joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Samantha McGarity (2022-23, Harrison High School), Katelynn Dollar (2021-22, Lyndon Academy), Mary Brady (2020-21, St. Pius X Catholic High School), and Hannah Miniutti (2019-20, Blessed Trinity Catholic 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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