

**LONG BEACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE
YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 27, 2020) — In its 35th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced **Brooklyn Biancamano of Long Beach High School** as its **2019-20 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year**. Biancamano is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Long Beach 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 Biancamano as Mississippi's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in February, Biancamano joins an elite alumni association of past 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 Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-4 sophomore broke the tape at the MHSAA 5A State Championships this past season, clocking the fastest all-class time of the day in 18:33.20 to finish nearly a minute ahead of her next-closest competitor. Biancamano won eight of nine races last fall, including her state title run, which helped her team take fourth in Class 5A. A three-time MHSAA Cross Country All-State Team selection, she also earned Gatorade State Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year honors in the spring of 2019. In 35 career races as a high school competitor, Biancamano has recorded 22 victories and nine top-three finishes. The state meet 5K record-holder (18:03.50 in 2017), she took silver at the 2017 Junior Olympics at 4K and owns state age-group records at 5K for ages 13 through 15.

Conversant in American Sign Language (ASL), Biancamano has served as a member of the Long Beach Mayor's Youth Council as well as her school's Junior Civitan club, and has volunteered as a mentor on behalf of the Heritage Christian Academy Cross Country Camp. A member of her local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, she has also donated her time to coastal clean-up efforts in addition to serving as an instructor/mentor at a youth cross country camp. "Brooklyn ran the fastest all-class time at the state championships and was unbeaten against in-state competition," said Erik Boal, editor for DyeStat. "She keeps adding to an impressive record of achievement, and she's only a sophomore."

Biancamano has maintained a 5.34 GPA on a 4.0 scale in the classroom and ranks No. 1 in her class. 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 and field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. From the 12 national winners, one male and one female athlete are each named Gatorade High School Athlete of the Year. In all, 607 athletes are honored each year.

Two-time winner Biancamano joins Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year Katelyn Cartwright (2017-18, Hernando High School), and Kate Mattox (2016-17, 2015-16 & 2014-15, Starkville High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Biancamano has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

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 www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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