

**POMPERAUG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 8, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Kate Wisner of Pomperaug High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Wisner is the first Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Pomperaug 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 Wisner as Connecticut'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 April, Wisner 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 5-foot senior raced to first place at the East Coast Championships this past fall with a time of 17:25.9. Wisner also captured the Northeast High School Club Championships in 16:46.8 and won her fourth consecutive South West Conference championship.

Wisner helps provide care for her grandmother and has volunteered locally on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. "Four years ago, a petite freshman showed up for practice with the goal of making the team's top seven," said Pomperaug coach Mark Goodwin. "Now, Kate has proven to be one of the best distance runners in the country. She trained hard and then put that training into play. Her only roadblock her senior year has been the pandemic."

Wisner has maintained a 3.97 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Wisner joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Sydney Masciarelli (2019-20 & 2018-19, Marianapolis Preparatory School) and Morgan McCormick (2017-18 & 2016-17, Wilton High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Wisner has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Wisner is also eligible to submit a 30-second 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 \$2.7 million across 1,117 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 www.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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