

**ST. PIUS X CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE GEORGIA 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 Mary Brady of St. Pius X Catholic High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Brady is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Pius X Catholic 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 Brady as Georgia'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, Brady 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-3-inch senior distance talent led the Golden Lions to a second straight GHSA Class 5A state title this past season, breaking the tape in the state meet with a time of 18:47.62 to win by 7.99 seconds. Brady was unbeaten by Georgia competitors this year, winning six of nine meets and clocking the state's two fastest 5K times by a girl, including a personal-best 17:34.14 to finish 11th at the RunningLane National Cross Country Championship to earn Second Team All-American status. Also the Atlanta Track Club 2020 Runner of the Year, she took second at the prestigious Coach Wood Invitational and third at the Alexander / Asics Invitational.

The beekeeper at her family's farm and a devoted parishioner of St. Stephens Catholic Church, Brady has volunteered locally planting for Trees Atlanta and on behalf of the homeless in association with St. Francis Table. Also a member of her school's Model UN club, she has been vocal about having overcome anorexia nervosa and strives to help others develop healthy body image and eating habits. "Mary never sacrificed tomorrow for fleeting success today," said Marist School Assistant coach Kevin Lisle. "She bought into the system of long-term development that her coach espoused, and she reaped the rewards this year, when she was the most consistent, dominant performer in the state. I'm sure many of her teammates look up to her, as I know many of the girls on my own team do."

Brady has maintained a 97.1 average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Georgia Institute of Technology 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.

Brady joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Hannah Miniutti (2019-20, Blessed Trinity Catholic High School), Ellie Hall (2018-19, Marietta High School), Elizabeth Funderburk (2017-18, Colquitt County High School), and Nicole Fegans (2016-17, Landmark Christian School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Brady has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Brady 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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