

**BOISE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IDAHO 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 Sammy Smith of Boise High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Smith is the second Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Boise 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 Smith as Idaho'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, Smith 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 freshman won the Class 5A state meet this past season with a time of 17:45.34, breaking the tape 32.49 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Braves to the state team title. Undefeated against all competition since middle school, Smith finished the season ranked No. 25 in the country by MileSplit.com. She is also a national champion Nordic and mogul skier, and she is also a member of the U.S. Soccer Under-16 Women's National Team player pool.

Along with her siblings, Smith founded and serves as a board member of the non-profit GO BIG INC., which provides resources and opportunities for underprivileged youth. She has volunteered locally at homeless shelters and food banks and as a peer math tutor. "Sammy Smith was dominant in her freshman campaign," said Jeff Howard, head coach of Rocky Mountain High. "She is a relentless competitor. It is evident that she loves to compete and see how far she can push the limits with her legs."

Smith has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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 & 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 works with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Smith joins recent Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Mattie Geddes (2019-20, 2018-2019, Twin Falls High School) and Lexy Halladay (2017-18 & 2016-2017, Mountain View High School) among the state's list of former award winners.

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