

**CHAPMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 8, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Taylor Briggs of Chapman High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Briggs is the first Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Chapman 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 Briggs as Kansas'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, Briggs 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 broke the tape at the KSHSAA 4A State Championships with a time of 18:19.00, outdistancing her next-closest competitor by almost two minutes. Her state meet speed rating according to Dyestat and TullyRunners.com ranked No. 40 nationally among the Top 100 fastest competitors in the country. Just the sixth Kansas girl in history to win four state titles, Briggs finished 7-0 on the season to go undefeated on some of the state's most challenging racecourses, clocking a 5K personal-best 18:07.10 in the process. The two-time reigning Kansas Best of Preps Female Cross Country Athlete of the Year and a nine-time state champion overall including track and field, Briggs raced and trained as the only girl on the Chapman team in both 2019 and 2020.

Briggs is a four-year member of her school's Student Council and served as her class president her freshman year. An American Youth Foundation National Leadership Award-winner in 2020, she has been a member of both Students Against Destructive Driving Decisions and her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter. Briggs has volunteered locally at a library, a soup kitchen and on behalf of community service initiatives with her church community. Also a member of her church bell choir, she has served as a peer tutor, a community pool swim instructor and has assisted at a youth track and field camp. "In the six years I've known Taylor as a student-athlete, I can confidently say she has it all," said Cindy Zumbrunn, head coach at Chapman High. "By that I mean natural ability, self-motivation, work ethic, desire, determination and grit. On top of that, she's responsible, dependable, conscientious and respectful."

Briggs has maintained a 3.93 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Iowa State 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 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.

Briggs joins recent Gatorade Kansas Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Hope Jackson (2019-20, Bishop Carroll Catholic High School), Jaybe Shufelberger (2018-19, Washburn Rural High School), Olivia Sovereign (2017-18, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School), and Molly Born (2016-17, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Briggs has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Briggs 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](http://www.playeroftheyear.gatorade.com), on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) or follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Gatorade](https://www.twitter.com/Gatorade).