

**FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MAINE 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 Sofie Matson of Falmouth High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Matson is the first Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Falmouth 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 Matson as Maine'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, Matson 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 state's three-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-9 senior was undefeated against in-state competition for a fourth straight season. She won the Cumberland County State Qualifier with a time of 18:08.85, breaking the tape 26.61 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. Matson is a three-time Class A state champion and the winner of the 2019 New England Interscholastic Cross Country Championships. She has also twice competed at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships.

An accomplished clarinetist, Matson has performed with the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble and the Portland Youth Symphony Orchestra. She is a member of the Falmouth High debate team and volunteers for the school paper. "Sofie handled the disappointments of a broken senior season with grace and maturity," said Jorma Kurry, co-head coach of Falmouth High School. "She rolled with every new twist that the situation brought, once again posting the fastest times in the state and completing an undefeated season."

Matson has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has made a verbal commitment to attend Columbia University this fall, where she will run track and cross country.

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.

Four-time winner Matson joins recent Gatorade Maine Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Abigail Hamilton (2016-17, Yarmouth High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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