

**HOLLISTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Carmen Luisi of Holliston High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Luisi is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Holliston 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 Luisi as Massachusetts'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, Luisi 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-6 freshman won the Frank Mooney Invitational this past season with a personal-best time of 18:40, breaking the tape 16 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. The MVP of the Tri-Valley League, Luisi won all five of the races she entered, including a first-place finish at the MSTCA Cup Division 2 race.

Luisi has volunteered locally with Generation Ratify Holliston, a youth-led movement to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment and advance gender equality in the United States. "Considering Carmen's age, she is an incredible runner," said Kent Taylor, head coach of Norton High School. "She has the poise and confidence of an elite upperclassman and the athleticism of one as well."

Luisi has maintained an A-minus average 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.

Luisi joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Lucy Jenks (2019-20, Newton South High School), Grace Connolly (2018-19, 2017-18 & 2016-17, Natick High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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