

**STILLWATER AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 Analee Weaver of Stillwater Area High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Weaver is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Stillwater Area 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 Weaver as Minnesota'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, Weaver 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 returning Gatorade Runner of the Year, the 5-foot-1 senior set the state record in the 5K with a time of 16:42.6 at the Forest Lakes Suburban East Conference Tri-Meet on Oct. 1. Weaver completed an undefeated season against in-state competition by winning the Twin Cities Running Club Showcase Large School Division race in 17:04.38, breaking the tape 44.62 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. She also took fourth at the XC Town USA Meet of Champions.

Weaver works at a nursing facility and she has volunteered locally with a foster child program. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church. "Ana Weaver is the total package. She is an outstanding runner and she is a very hard worker," said Dawn Podolske, head coach of Stillwater High School. "Ana is mentally tough and can push herself to the limit."

Weaver has maintained a weighted 4.20 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Brigham Young 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.

Two-time winner Weaver joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Emily Covert (2018-19, Washburn High School), Tierney Wolfgram (2017-18, Math & Science Academy), and Lauren Peterson (2016-17, Farmington High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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

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