

**MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEBRASKA 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 Stella Miner of Marian High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Miner is the second Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Marian 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 Miner as Nebraska'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, Miner 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-4 freshman won the Division A state meet this past season with a meet-record time of 18:11, breaking the tape 4.3 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Crusaders to a fifth place finish as a team. Miner won her final five races of the fall, including three by more than a minute. In her first year as a cross country runner, she was a member of the Nebraska Coaches Association 2020 Super-State Team.

Miner is a member of the Marian Speech Team. "Each time Stella stepped to the line, when that gun went off she ran with fire," said Dustin Llewellyn, head coach of Millard South High School. "It was the look in her eye. She is the best distance runner in the state of Nebraska."

Miner 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.

Miner joins recent Gatorade Nebraska Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Berlyn Schutz (2019-20, Lincoln East High School), Kaylie Crews (2018-19, Papillion-La Vista South High School), Gabby McGinn (2017-18, Millard West High School), and Taylor Somers (2016-17, Millard South High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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