

**WOODS CROSS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Carlee Hansen of Woods Cross High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Hansen is the first Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Woods Cross 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 Hansen as Utah'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, Hansen 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-2 senior raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 19:55. The 2019-20 Gatorade Utah Girls Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Hansen also won the Wasatch Invitational, the Wildcat Invitational, the TwiKnight Invitational and the Border Wars Utah Qualifier. She took third at the Desert Twilight Festival and finished sixth at the High School XC National Invitational.

A member of HOSA, an association of future health professionals, Hansen has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Carlee Hansen is a tremendously talented athlete and has been a joy to coach," said Woods Cross coach Zach Hansen. "She works extremely hard and has made sacrifices in an effort to reach her full potential as a runner. She's a fierce competitor who's willing to take risks."

Hansen has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of North Carolina 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.

Hansen joins recent Gatorade Utah Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Eliza Arrington (2019-20, Lone Peak High School), Anna Martin (2018-19, Lehi High School), Sadie Sargent (2017-18, North Summit High School), and Whitney Rich (2016-17, Bingham High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Hansen has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. Hansen is also eligible to submit a 30-second video explaining why the organization she 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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