

**RAWLINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WYOMING 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 Sydney Thorvaldson of Rawlins High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Thorvaldson is the first Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Rawlins 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 Thorvaldson as Wyoming'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, Thorvaldson 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 Girls Cross Country Player of the Year and a two-time Gatorade Wyoming Girls Track & Field Player of the Year, the 5-foot-4 senior won the Class 3A state meet this past season with a state-record time of 16:59.6, breaking the tape more than two minutes and thirty seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor, leading the Outlaws to a fourth place finish as a team. Thorvaldson also set a state prep 5K record in Colorado when she won the Heritage Distance Classic in 16:19.0. She also owns the fastest prep 5K mark in Idaho by virtue of her title-winning run at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional in 2019.

A member of the Rawlins High School student council and National Honor Society, Thorvaldson has volunteered locally on behalf of community beautification projects and has donated her time as a teacher's aide at her church. "I have watched Sydney run for four years for Rawlins, and I have been very impressed by her work ethic, her humility and her athleticism," said Sandy Moon, head coach of Buffalo High School. "Sydney exemplifies everything that a coach wants in a runner. When I coached my girls through a race with Sydney, she shot out so fast that you would honestly forget that she was in the race."

Thorvaldson has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country and track on scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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.

Four-time winner Thorvaldson joins recent Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Anna Gibson (2016-17, Jackson Hole High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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