

**NEWBURY PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 15, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Colin Sahlman of Newbury Park High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Sahlman is the second Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Newbury Park 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 Sahlman as California's best high school boys cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in April, Sahlman 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-11, 125-pound junior won Arizona's Desert Twilight Festival this past season with a time of 14:53.67. Sahlman also finished 20th at the national XC Town USA Meet of Champions, helping the Panthers to first place as a team. He has posted track times in both the mile and the 3,200 that rank as the nation's No. 1 performances among prep competitors in 2021 at the time of his selection.

Sahlman has volunteered locally on behalf of a youth running camp and a program to feed the homeless. "I knew Colin was built to run the moment I met him, but being a great distance runner takes more than just looking the part," said Newbury Park coach Sean Brosnan. "It takes hard work, sacrifice and dedication—all three of which Colin possesses. I've coached some great athletes, but he is among the best."

Sahlman has maintained a 3.38 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior 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.

Sahlman joins recent Gatorade California Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Nico Young (2019-20, Newbury Park High School), Liam Anderson (2018-19 & 2017-18, Redwood High School), and Callum Bolger (2016-17, San Luis Obispo High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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