

**NEASE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (April 15, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Rheinhardt Harrison of Nease High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Harrison is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Nease 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 Harrison as Florida'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, Harrison 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 6-foot, 144-pound junior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:26.9. Harrison won the AAU National Championships, breaking the tape in 15:08.72. He also captured the Region 1 championship, the District 2 championship and the Bale-n-Trail Cross Country Original.

Harrison has volunteered locally on behalf of charity running events. "No current runner (at the high school level in Florida) has been as good as Rheinhardt at such a young age," said Nease coach Ted DeVos. "What really sets him apart is the ability to focus and tune out the surrounding noise. Every coach is going to say their athlete is the best, but objectively, Rheinhardt has the marks and the rankings to prove it."

Harrison has maintained a 3.29 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.

Harrison joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Ethan Geiger (2019-20, Robinson High School), Charles Hicks (2018-19, The Bolles School), Michael Phillips (2017-18, Chiles High School), and Caleb Pottorff (2016-17, Lincoln Park Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

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