

**MARBLEHEAD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 Loeden Rodrigues of Marblehead High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Rodrigues is the first Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Marblehead 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 Rodrigues as Massachusetts'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, Rodrigues 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-8, 115-pound senior won all three major invitationals staged in the state this past season. Rodrigues broke the tape at the Frank Kelley Invitational, the Frank Mooney Invitational and the Division 1 race at the MSTCA Cup—leading his team to a second-place finish in the latter. Also the 2020 Lynn Item Player of the Year, he was a 2019 Boston Globe and Boston Herald All-Scholastic selection, taking third at the 2019 All-State Meet and finishing second at the Eastern Massachusetts Division 3 meet.

A member of the Marblehead High Engineering Club, Rodrigues has volunteered locally with the Marblehead-Swampscott YMCA and as a youth soccer coach. "In an obviously atypical cross country season, Loeden proved himself to be the best racer in the state," said MSTCA Hall of Famer John Boyle, head coach of St. John's Prep.

Rodrigues has maintained a 3.24 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst 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.

Rodrigues joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Mike Griffin (2019-20, King Philip Regional High School), Ryan Oosting (2018-19, Arlington High School), Tristan Shelgren (2017-18, St. John's Preparatory School), and Marcelo Rocha (2016-17, Peabody High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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