

**FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MICHIGAN 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 Nathan Walker of Fremont High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Walker is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Fremont 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 Walker as Michigan'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, Walker 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, 141-pound senior raced to the Division 2 individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:19.39, leading the Packers to the state title as a team. Walker also won the Bulldog Invitational, the Hill and Bale Invitational and the regional championship. He took fourth at the national XC Town USA Meet of Champions in 15:20.2.

Walker has volunteered locally on behalf of David's House Ministries, a food pantry and youth track camps. "Nathan checks all the boxes that set great athletes apart: talent, dedication, work ethic and the desire to improve," said Fremont High School coach Cliff Somers. "But I've been most impressed with the way he has taken our young athletes under his wing. He's always looking out for his teammates."

Walker has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at Purdue University 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.

Walker joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Carter Solomon (2019-20 & 2018-19, Plymouth High School), Nick Foster (2017-18, Pioneer High School), and Noah Jacobs (2016-17, Corunna High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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