

**SOUTH BRUNSWICK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Vidhur Polam of South Brunswick High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. Polam is the first Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from South Brunswick 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 Polam as New Jersey'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, Polam 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, 130-pound senior won the Holmdel Invitational this past season with a time of 15:32. Polam also broke the tape at the sectional championship and the Middlesex County championship. He took fourth at the East Coast Championships in 16:05.5.

Polam has served as a youth yoga and meditation instructor and has volunteered locally with a soccer program supporting children with special needs. "Vidhur was someone who came to the sport of cross country later in life, but he's never allowed that deficit to define him," said South Brunswick coach Wilfredo Rivera. "His attention to detail, regardless of the race outcome, allows him to continue improving and evolving as a racer and athlete."

Polam has maintained a weighted 4.43 GPA in the classroom. He will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track and field.

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.

Polam joins recent Gatorade New Jersey Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Liam Murphy (2019-20, Allentown High School), Jack Stanley (2018-19, West Morris Mendham High School), Devin Hart (2017-18, Point Pleasant Borough High School), and Elliot Gindi (2016-17, Ocean Township High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

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