

**GLENVAR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 10, 2021) — In its 36th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Carly Wilkes of Glenvar High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. Wilkes is the second Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Glenvar 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 Wilkes as Virginia's best high school girls cross country player. Wilkes 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-4 junior won the Class 2 state meet title this past season with a time of 18:13.5, breaking the tape 1:03.1 ahead of her next-closest competitor. Wilkes was undefeated during the spring season, including a 25-second win at the Pole Green Spring Championships. Running as an individual in the fall, Wilkes won the Gravely Hill Fall Fest and finished 36th at the national XC Town USA Meet of Champions.

The president-elect of the Glenvar High BETA service club, Wilkes took first in the impromptu speaking category at a regional competition for the Future Business Leaders of America. She has volunteered locally at the Rescue Mission of Roanoke and as a peer mentor. "Carly has always been a hard worker and has gotten exponentially better each year through high school, distancing herself from her peers each year," said Jeremy Bartley, head coach of Alleghany High. "She loves to compete and goes searching for strong competition."

Wilkes has maintained a weighted 4.17 GPA in the classroom and ranks No. 1 in her class. She will begin her 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Wilkes joins recent Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Bethany Graham (2019-20, John Champe High School), Mary Caroline Heinen (2018-19, Maggie L. Walker Governor's School), Olivia Beckner (2017-18, South Lakes High School), and Kate Murphy (2016-17, Lake Braddock Secondary School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Wilkes has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. Wilkes 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.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.

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