

**ISSAQUAH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE WASHINGTON GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (May 10, 2021) — In its 36<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company today announced Julia David-Smith of Issaquah High School as its 2020-21 Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. David-Smith is the first Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Issaquah 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 David-Smith as Washington's best high school girls cross country player. David-Smith 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-6 senior took ninth at the 2020 AAU National XC Championships this past season with a time of 17:23.7, crossing the line as the state's top finisher at the event. Washington State's returning Girls Cross Country Gatorade Player of the Year, David-Smith also won the Class 4A Virtual State Meet in 16:55.1 Last fall, she broke the tape in the Desert Daylight Invitational, clocking a personal-best 5K time of 17:01.91, and took second in the Desert Twilight Festival Club Sweeps race a week later.

David-Smith has volunteered locally on behalf of a food and clothing bank that serves the needy, a pet adoption center and a youth basketball team. "Julia's drive and commitment to the sport is unique and sets her apart," said Issaquah coach Liza Rickey. "She trains and races to the highest level, continually pushing herself and setting new goals."

David-Smith has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in cross country and track and field on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Two-time winner David-Smith joins recent Gatorade Washington Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Ella Borsheim (2018-19, Bellarmine Preparatory School), Katie Thronson (2017-18, Lewis and Clark High School), and Jordan Oakes (2016-17, Holy Names Academy), among the state's list of former award winners.

Through Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," David-Smith has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of their choosing. David-Smith 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](http://www.Gatorade.com/POY), 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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