

**SKYLINE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IDAHO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 24, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Nelah Roberts of Skyline High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Roberts is the first Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Skyline 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 Roberts as Idaho's best high school girls cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in February, Roberts 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-7 sophomore won the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 17:53.3, breaking the tape 27.9 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Grizzlies to a third-place finish as a team. Roberts took 10th at the Eastbay West Regional Championships and finished 25th at the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships. She also recorded a third-place finish at the Nike Cross Northwest Regional Championships.

Roberts helps with her family's business of breeding Bernese Mountain Dogs. A member of the Skyline High Ski Club, she has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Nelah is a fantastic runner," said Jason Lish, head coach of Blackfoot High School. "What sets her apart from other runners is her tenacity—mentally, she may be one of the toughest runners we compete against. She loves to go out fast and let the others know she is in control of the race."

Roberts has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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 leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Roberts joins recent Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Sammy Smith (2020-21, Boise High School), Mattie Geddes (2019-20 & 2018-19, Twin Falls High School), and Lexy Halladay (2017-18, Mountain View High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Roberts has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Roberts is also eligible to submit a short 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 \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 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 [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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