

**LONG BEACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSISSIPPI GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 24, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Brooklyn Biancamano** of **Long Beach High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Biancamano is the first Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Long Beach 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 Biancamano as Mississippi'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, Biancamano 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 state's three-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year in cross country and a two-time Gatorade winner in Track and Field, the 5-foot-4 senior distance talent led the Bearcats to fourth place as a team at the MHSAA Class 5A State XC Championships this past season, breaking the tape to win the individual title with a course-record time of 18:03.60—the fastest all-class clocking of the postseason. A five-time state champion and All-State selection, Biancamano ran the state's top 5K girls time (18:00.38) by 41.12 seconds in 2021 as the top Mississippi finisher at the Jesse Owens Classic (third overall). The 2021 Clarion Ledger Athlete of the Year for all girls sports, she finished fifth at the NXR South Regional Championships with a time of 18:03.70.

Biancamano is a co-leader of Long Beach High's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter and belongs to the school's community service Rotary International Interact Club. Conversant in American Sign Language (ASL) and a member of the Michael Memorial Baptist Church youth group, she has served as a member of the Long Beach Mayor's Youth Council and her school's Junior Civitan club, and she has volunteered as a mentor with the Heritage Christian Academy (Picayune) Cross Country Camp. She has also donated her time on behalf of a baseball program for physically and intellectually challenged youth as well as coastal clean-up efforts and the Quarles Elementary School Field Day. "Now a six-time Gatorade winner, Brooklyn has matched the record for Mississippi's most decorated Gatorade Player of the Year honoree," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat. "Only Pass Christian's Cory McGee (2007-10 in cross country and track), who went on to become a 10-time All-American at the University of Florida, has been a six-time winner in the state. The last person not named Brooklyn Biancamano to win a 5A title in the state did so in 2016. Let's just say, I'm looking forward to her outdoor track campaign."

Biancamano has maintained a 5.48 weighted GPA on a 4.0 scale in the classroom, which ranks No. 1 in her class. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Arkansas 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.

Four-time winner Biancamano joins recent Gatorade Mississippi Girls Cross Country Player of the Year Katelyn Cartwright (2017-18, Hernando 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, Biancamano 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. Biancamano 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.

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