

**HELLGATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Kensey May** of **Hellgate High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. May is the first Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Hellgate 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 May as Montana'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, May 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 returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-8 senior won her second-straight Class AA state meet this past season with a time of 18:16.14, breaking the tape 9.51 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Knights to a second-place finish as a team. Undefeated against in-state competition, May took fourth at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional Championships and finished 12th at the Eastbay West Regional Championships. She was the 2019 Virginia Class 1 state cross country champion as a sophomore at Parry McCluer High.

May has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and she has donated her time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through her school's National Honor Society. "Kensey was the most consistent competitor I have seen in a long time," said Casey Jermyn, head coach of Bozeman High School. "She has an awesome attitude and all-around is just a great athlete."

May has maintained a 3.92 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Syracuse University 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.

Two-time winner May joins recent Gatorade Montana Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Kylie Hartnett (2019-20, Helena High School), Tiahna Vlastic (2018-19, Billings Senior High School) and Camila Noe (2017-18, Bozeman 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, May 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. May 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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