

**ST. MICHAEL'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Raylee Hunt** of **St. Michael's High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hunt is the first Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Michael's 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 Hunt as New Mexico'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, Hunt 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 freshman won the Class 3A state meet this past season with a time of 19:12.14, breaking the tape more than a minute ahead of her next-closest competitor. Hunt won five of the eight races she entered and lost only once to an in-state runner. She concluded her season with a 41st-place finish at the Nike Cross Southwest Regional Championships. Her mother, Kristi Hartley Hunt, was the Gatorade New Mexico Girls Basketball Player of the Year for Roy High in 1994-95.

Hunt has volunteered locally with the St. Michael's Student Wellness Action Team, a program focused on service to the community. She has also donated her time to multiple community service initiatives through her church youth group. "Raylee had an amazing season this year," said Laura LewAllen, head coach of Santa Fe Preparatory School. "She really seemed to have matured into her talents, meaning that her wisdom and confidence caught up with her athletic abilities. She competes hard and is willing to push herself to be her best."

Hunt has maintained a weighted 4.40 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Hunt joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Laurynn Sisneros (2020-21, Eldorado High School), Leah Futey (2019-20, Sue Cleveland High School), Jasmine Turtle-Morales (2018-19, Eldorado High School), and Amanda Mayoral (2017-18, 2016-17 & 2015-16, Cleveland 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, Hunt 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. Hunt 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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