

**CORNWALL CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Karrie Baloga** of **Cornwall Central High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Baloga is the second Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Cornwall Central 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 Baloga as New York'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, Baloga 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 junior took fourth at the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 17:29.1, earning All-American honors in the process. Baloga also won the New York Federation Championship in 17:54.7, and broke the tape at the Section 9 championships, the Six Flags Wild Safari Invitational and the Eastern States Championship race at the Manhattan College Invitational. She took third at the Class A state meet and was fifth at the Eastbay Northeast Regional Championships.

Baloga has volunteered locally on behalf of her school's Environmental Club and youth running programs. "Karrie is one of those athletes a coach may have once or twice in a career," said Cornwall Central High School coach Dave Feuer. "I first started coaching her in eighth grade and immediately saw that I was working with someone years ahead of her actual age as far as work ethic and the will to win."

Baloga has maintained an A average in the classroom. She will begin her senior 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.

Baloga joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Brooke Rauber (2020-21, Tully High School) and Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, 2018-19, & 2017-18, North Rockland 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, Baloga 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. Baloga 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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