

**THE WEBB SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 **Abby Faith Cheeseman** of **The Webb School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Cheeseman is the first Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from The Webb 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 Cheeseman as Tennessee'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, Cheeseman 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 freshman won the Division II-A state meet this past season with a time of 17:26.91, breaking the tape 1:31.67 ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Feet to a fourth-place finish as a team. Cheeseman took fourth at the Eastbay South Regional Championships and was the only freshman girl to qualify for the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships, where she finished 31st. She concluded the 2021 campaign ranked as the nation's No. 19 runner by MileSplit.com.

A talented violinist who played at both of her sisters' weddings, Cheeseman played the lead role in her school's stage production of the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. She has volunteered locally at track meets. "Abby appears to be a once-in-a-generation runner," said Mark Newman, head coach of St. George's Academy. "Her improvement from 2020 to 2021 was astronomical. I am most impressed with her fitness and rhythm. She is a steady runner who loves to surge and get stronger throughout a race. She is very smart tactically in that she starts out very under control and just tightens the screws."

Cheeseman has maintained an unweighted 4.3 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.

Cheeseman joins recent Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Jenna Hutchins (2020-21 & 2019-20 Science Hill High School), and Sasha Neglia (2018-19 & 2017-18, Dobyys-Bennett 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, Cheeseman 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. Cheeseman 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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