

**NEASE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 31, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Rheinhardt Harrison** of **Nease High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Harrison is the first Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Nease 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 Harrison as Florida's best high school boys cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in February, Harrison 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 6-foot, 144-pound senior raced to the Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 15:03.6. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year in boys cross country, Harrison also won the Region 1 championship, the District 1 championship, the Bale-n-Trail Cross Country Original and the Katie Caples Invitational. In addition, he broke the tape at the Ridgeview Invitational and the New World Fall Spectacular.

Harrison has volunteered locally on behalf of charity running events. "This year has really helped to show Rheinhardt's maturity," said Nease High School coach Ted DeVos. "Everything is questioned by everyone when you're a national record-holder and multi-time state champion, but he has been able to tune this out, stay focused and enjoy his accomplishments with his teammates."

Harrison has maintained a 3.33 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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 Harrison joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Ethan Geiger (2019-20, Robinson High School), Charles Hicks (2018-19, The Bolles School), and Michael Phillips (2017-18, Chiles 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, Harrison 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. Harrison 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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