

**MAUI HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE HAWAII 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 **Kaimana Cantere** of **Maui High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Cantere is the second Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Maui 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 Cantere as Hawaii'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, Cantere 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-9, 129-pound senior won the state meet this past season with a time of 18:48.26, breaking the tape less than a second ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Sabers to a sixth-place finish as a team. Cantere was unbeaten against in-state competition, winning five of his six races by at least 58 seconds. He also was the state's top finisher at the USATF National Junior Olympic Championships in Kentucky.

Cantere has volunteered locally as part of fundraising campaigns to benefit the Kapi'olani Center for Women and Children as well as to support cancer research. He has also donated his time as part of community beautification projects. "Kaimana's victory at the state [meet] was memorable," said Jared Welch, head coach of Maui High School. "He endured the extreme conditions of the course due to weather, executed the plan he had for the race and was able to out-race his opponent to become a champion."

Cantere has maintained a B average in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Cantere joins recent Gatorade Hawaii Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Hunter Shields (2020-21, 2019-20 & 2018-19, Maui High School), and Colby Otero (2017-18, Kalaheo 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, Cantere 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. Cantere 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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