

**IOWA CITY WEST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 **Alex McKane** of **Iowa City West High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. McKane is the first Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Iowa City West 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 McKane as Iowa'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, McKane 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, 145-pound senior won four races and had four second-place finishes this past season, including victories at the Heartland Classic and the Steve Johnson Invitational. McKane took second at the Class 4A state meet, leading the Trojans to a third-place finish as a team. A two-time First Team All-State selection, he also finished 17th at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships.

A leader in his local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, McKane has volunteered locally at a nursing home and as a youth running coach in addition to donating his time to Houses into Homes, which provides gently-used household products to those in need. "McKane is one of the most consistent top runners I've ever seen," said Chad Larson, head coach of Norwalk High School. "He rarely cares about who else is in the race, he just goes out to win. He's not afraid one bit to lead from start to finish. And in most cases, he has the speed to take people down coming down the homestretch."

McKane has maintained a weighted 4.05 GPA 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.

McKane joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Nate Mueller (2020-21, Adel-Desoto-Minburn High School), Max Murphy (2019-20, Pleasant Valley High School), and Tim Sindt (2018-19 & 2017-18, Ankeny 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, McKane 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. McKane 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.

###