

**BELL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Caden Miracle of Bell County High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Miracle is the first Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Bell County 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 Miracle as Kentucky'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, Miracle 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-1, 150-pound junior won the Class AA state meet this past season with a time of 16:04.67, breaking the tape 1.82 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Bobcats to a seventh-place finish as a team. Miracle won eight of 10 races on the season, including victories at the Wayne County Invitational and the KTCCA Meet of Champions. He also finished 40th at the Eastbay South Regional Championships.

Miracle has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Caden works harder than any kid that I've ever coached," said Jason Stewart, head coach of Bell County High School. "You can work up a race plan with Caden and he will execute it to scientific effect. I've never been around a runner who's able to do the things that he does."

Miracle has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Miracle joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jackson Watts (2020-21, Madisonville-North Hopkins High School), Conner O'Shea (2019-20, Madison Central High School), and Keeton Thornsberry (2019-18 & 2017-18, Holy Cross 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, Miracle 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. Miracle 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.