

**CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **Antonio Camacho-Bucks** of **Centennial High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Camacho-Bucks is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Centennial 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 Camacho-Bucks as Maryland'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, Camacho-Bucks 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-8, 120-pound junior won the Class 3A state meet this past season with a time of 15:51.38, breaking the tape 14.52 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Eagles to a third-place finish as a team. The 2021 Washington Post All-Met Player of the Year, Camacho-Bucks earned Second Team All-Region honors by finishing 13th at the Eastbay Northeast Regional Championships. He clocked a personal-best 15:03.50 to capture second place at the MPSSAA 3A East Region Championships.

Camacho-Bucks has achieved the rank of Star Scout with the Boy Scouts of America. He has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth swim coach in addition to donating his time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Antonio is one of those special athletes that leaves nothing else on the course," said Jordan Sterner, head coach of Mount Hebron High School. "He is one of the most exciting competitors to watch in our region."

Camacho-Bucks has maintained a weighted 3.30 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.

Camacho-Bucks joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jake Gelfand (2020-21, Severna Park High School), Owen Johnson (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School), Obsaa Feda (2018-19, Northwood High School), and Dalton Hengst (2017-18, McDonogh 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, Camacho-Bucks 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. Camacho-Bucks 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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