

**HARTLAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MICHIGAN BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 31, 2022) — In its 37<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Riley Hough** of **Hartland High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hough is the first Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Hartland 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 Hough as Michigan'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, Hough 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, 133-pound senior raced to a national title and All-American honors at the Eastbay Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:11.4. Hough also earned All-American status at the national Garmin RunningLane Cross Country Championships, placing fifth. He won the Div. 1 individual state championship in 14:56.5 and finished first at the MSU Spartan Invitational, the Jackson Invitational, the Portage Invitational and the Eastbay Midwest Regional Championships.

Hough has volunteered locally on behalf of a community garden. "Riley Hough is by far the best runner in Michigan cross country, it's not even close," said Michael Kessler, head coach at Skyline High. "A strong argument could easily be made that he is the best in the country."

Hough has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Michigan State University 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.

Hough joins recent Gatorade Michigan Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Nathan Walker (2020-21, Fremont High School), Carter Solomon (2019-20 & 2018-19, Plymouth High School), and Nick Foster (2017-18, Pioneer 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, Hough 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. Hough 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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