

**ROBBINSDALE ARMSTRONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Noah Breker** of **Robbinsdale Armstrong High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Breker is the first Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Robbinsdale Armstrong 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 Breker as Minnesota'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, Breker 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, 155-pound junior finished second at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships with a school-record time of 15:05.8 for 5K, breaking a mark that had stood for more than 50 years. Breker won four of his nine races and finished as runner-up three times, including at the Class AAA state meet. He also took 34<sup>th</sup> at the Eastbay Midwest Regional Championships.

Breker has volunteered locally at the Twin Cities Marathon, and he has donated his time on behalf of multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Noah is the hardest-working runner I have ever coached," said Robb Stephens, head coach of Robbinsdale Armstrong High School. "He is a student of the sport—constantly trying to learn more to improve his performance."

Breker, who is home-schooled, has maintained a 3.62 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.

Breker joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Ethan Vargas (2020-21, Stillwater Area High School), Nick Scheller (2019-20, Chanhassen High School), and Acer Iverson (2018-19 & 2017-18, Roseville Area 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, Breker 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. Breker 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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