

**ROCK BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Andrew Hauser** of **Rock Bridge High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hauser is the second Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Rock Bridge 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 Hauser as Missouri'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, Hauser 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, 135-pound sophomore distance talent became the first Missourian to win the NXR Midwest Regional Championships and followed up by becoming the top Missouri finisher at the national RunningLane Cross Country Championships, breaking the boys prep state record for 5K in the process with a time of 14:38.15. Hauser was also the state's top finisher at the Eastbay Midwest Region Cross Country Championships this past season, crossing the line in 12<sup>th</sup> overall. He finished 25<sup>th</sup> at nationals. Hauser is the younger brother of the 2020-21 Gatorade Missouri Player of the Year for boys cross country, Matthew Hauser. The 2021 MSHSAA Class 5 individual state champion in leading the Bruins to the team title, he ranked No. 46 in the 2021 Dystat national Top 100 rankings. His winning time of 14:52.70 at the state meet set a course record.

An active member of his church community at The Crossing, Hauser has volunteered on behalf of its youth group, including completing extensive service-mission work. He also leads a weekly team Bible study. "Andrew Hauser is very deserving of being Gatorade's Missouri winner for the boys," said Michael Dierks, head coach at Rockhurst High School. "His season was full of highly competitive races and he never finished worse than third. Probably even more impressive is how he continued to improve as the season progressed. His state race set a course record at Gans Creek and his time at nationals is just incredible."

Hauser has maintained a 3.67 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his junior 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.

Hauser joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Matthew Hauser (2020-21, Rock Bridge High School), Wes Porter (2019-20, Rockhurst High School), Christian Baker (2018-19, Kirkwood High School), and Victor Mugeche (2017-18, Blue Springs 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, Hauser 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. Hauser 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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