

**ST. RAPHAEL ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND 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 **Devan Kipyego** of **St. Raphael Academy** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Kipyego is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Raphael Academy.

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 Kipyego as Rhode Island'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, Kipyego 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, 130-pound junior won the state meet with a time of 15:32.30, breaking the tape 9.39 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. Kipyego also notched a win at the Class C state meet in 16:25.7, leading the Saints to a second-place finish as a team. In his first year as a distance runner, he was the top Rhode Island finisher at the 2021 New England Cross Country Championships, crossing the line in 11<sup>th</sup> with a time of 16:50.4, and he finished 20<sup>th</sup> at the Eastbay Northeast Regional Championships.

Kipyego's older brother, Darius, was a two-time Gatorade State Player of the Year in track & field. Devan has volunteered on behalf of local road races, and has donated his time to multiple community service initiatives through his church. "Devan decided to make cross country his main sport in the fall, switching from soccer," said Chris Magill, head coach of St. Raphael Academy. "He is a very dedicated and talented athlete that went from being in a [walking] boot last fall due to a soccer injury to winning the Rhode Island state title."

Kipyego has maintained a weighted B-plus average 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.

Kipyego joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jack McLoughlin (2020-21 & 2019-20, La Salle Academy), Jack McMahan (2018-19, Bishop Hendricken High School), and Jeffery Pedersen (2017-18, East Greenwich 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, Kipyego 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. Kipyego 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).

###