

**ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE TEXAS 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 **Emmanuel Sgouros** of **St. John's School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Sgouros is the first Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. John's 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 Sgouros as Texas'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, Sgouros 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, 145-pound senior finished 10th at the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:29.4, earning All-American honors in the process. Sgouros also broke the tape at the Southwest Preparatory Conference championship in 15:06.8, and won at the McNeil Invitational, the St. John's Maverick Ramble and the Brenham Hillacious Invitational. He took fourth at the Eastbay South Regional Championships.

Sgouros has served as a mentor for middle school runners and has volunteered locally on behalf of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. "Emmanuel is the most disciplined, driven, hardest-working and focused athlete I have coached in 38 years," said St. John's School coach Richie Mercado. "I have no doubt that he will run for Greece in a future Olympics or World Championships, because that is his goal—and he does everything he can to achieve his goals."

Sgouros has maintained an A average in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Texas 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.

Sgouros joins recent Gatorade Texas Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Judson Greer (2020-21, Melissa High School), Ryan Schoppe (2019-20, La Porte High School), and Graydon Morris (2018-19 & 2017-18, Aledo 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, Sgouros 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. Sgouros 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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