

**YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 **Owen McArdle** of **Yorktown High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. McArdle is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Yorktown 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 McArdle as Virginia'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, McArdle 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 senior won the Class 6 state meet this past season with a time of 15:45, breaking the tape 12 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Patriots to a second-place finish as a team. McArdle finished fifth at the Eastbay South Regional Championships. At the national Eastbay Cross Country Championships, he crossed the line in 28th.

McArdle has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics and as a youth swim coach. He has also donated his time on behalf of community beautification projects and as a reporter for his school newspaper. "When things really click for an athlete, it's cool to watch," said Jacob Dumford, head coach of Yorktown High School. "For two years now, Owen has just gotten better and better and better. It seems like from one race to the next, he launches himself to the next level."

McArdle has maintained a weighted 4.17 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Virginia 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.

McArdle joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Bryce Lentz (2020-21, Colgan High School), Daniel O'Brien (2019-20 & 2018-19, Virginia Episcopal School), and Sam Affolder (2017-18, Loudoun Valley 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, McArdle 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. McArdle 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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