

**CAMBRIDGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Eliana Black** of **Cambridge Christian School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Black is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Cambridge Christian 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 Black as Florida's best high school girls cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in January, Black joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Natalie Cook (2021-22, Flower Mound High School, Flower Mound, Texas), Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, North Rockland High School, Thiels, N.Y.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.).

The 5-foot-6 freshman raced to the Class 1A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:55.1, leading the Lancers to a second-place team finish. Black also won the FSU Pre-State Invitational, North Port Invitational, Hawks on the Hill Invitational and Zak Lukas Invitational. She took eighth at the Nike Southeast Regional Championships in North Carolina.

Black has volunteered locally with Saint Timothy Catholic Church as part of a monthly food service program, in addition to working with Metropolitan Ministries and Santa Maria Missions. She also served as a volunteer with U.S. Figure Skating. "In addition to going unbeaten during the regular season, including victories at the four biggest invitationals on her schedule, Eliana Black was also the only freshman in Florida to win a state championship in any classification in 2022," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "She also achieved the best performance of any Florida female competitor at a postseason meet by placing eighth at the Nike Southeast Regional."

Black has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Black joins recent Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Caroline Wells (2021-22 & 2020-21, Winter Springs High School), Alyssa Hendrix (2019-20, Riverview High School), and Tsion Yared (2018-19, Pine Crest School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade's Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade's social impact partners, supporting Gatorade's ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

For nearly 40 years, Gatorade has honored high school athletes at the top of their game as teammates, supporting their communities and achieving academic success. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes and community leaders, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport.

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.