

**HARRISON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE GEORGIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 23, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Samantha McGarity** of **Harrison High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. McGarity is the first Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Harrison 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 McGarity as Georgia'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, McGarity 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-4 junior raced to the Class 7A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:34.91, leading the Hoyas to second place as a team. McGarity also won the Cobb County Championships, in addition to finishing fourth at the Coach Wood Invitational, fifth at the Jesse Owens Classic and sixth at the Wingfoot Classic. She capped her season by taking 17th at the Champs Sports South Regional Championships in North Carolina and placing 42nd at the Garmin RunningLane National Championships in Alabama.

A member of the National Honor Society, McGarity has volunteered locally at canned food drives and with the Operation Christmas Gift fundraising initiatives. She has also been a volunteer with First Baptist Church of Powder Springs, as well as a peer tutor, and has excelled in the Harrison STEM program, a focused course of study in life science through the school's Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences Curriculum. "McGarity was the fastest competitor across all seven classifications at the state meet, then achieved the best performance by any Georgia female athlete at the regional level with her Top 20 effort at the Champs Sports South Regional event," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "She also gained valuable experience for the future by racing at the Garmin RunningLane Championships."

McGarity has maintained a 4.39 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her 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.

McGarity joins recent Gatorade Georgia Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Katelynn Dollar (2021-22, Lyndon Academy), Mary Brady (2020-21, St. Pius X Catholic High School), Hannah Miniutti (2019-20, Blessed Trinity Catholic High School), and Ellie Hall (2018-19, Marietta High 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](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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