

**GLENBARD NORTH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Grace Schager** of **Glenbard North High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Schager is the first Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Glenbard North 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 Schager as Illinois' 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, Schager 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-11 senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:40.35. Schager also won the Richard Spring Invitational, the Harvey Braus Invitational and the Naperville Twilight Invitational. She finished second at the Nike Midwest Regional Championships and then took fifth at Nike Cross Nationals to earn All-America honors for the first time in her career.

Schager has volunteered locally on behalf of the Feed My Starving Children program at St. Isidore Catholic Church. She has also served as a peer tutor through both the school's Math and Spanish honor societies, in addition to working at local running store, Dick Pond Athletics, helping athletes of all abilities find the right shoes for their running needs. "Grace Schager enjoyed an exceptional season, capped by the top performance by an Illinois athlete at any national postseason competition, earning All-America recognition at Nike Cross Nationals," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "Along with achieving record-setting marks on several of the state's most prestigious courses, Schager also vaulted herself into the top five prep performers in history at the LaVern Gibson course in Indiana with her runner-up effort at the Nike Midwest Regional."

Schager has maintained a weighted 4.58 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Schager joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Ava Parekh (2021-22 & 2020-21, Latin School of Chicago) and Katelynne Hart (2019-20 & 2018-19, Glenbard West 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 or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.