

**MADISON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KENTUCKY 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 **Ciara O'Shea** of **Madison Central High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kentucky Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. O'Shea is the first Gatorade Kentucky Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Madison Central 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 O'Shea as Kentucky'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, O'Shea 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 state's three-time returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Player of the Year, the 5-foot-2 senior won the Class 3A state meet for the fifth straight year this past season with a time of 17:07.60, leading the Indians to a fourth-place finish as a team. O'Shea became only the third girls cross country runner in U.S. prep history to win five consecutive state championships. She also won the Nike XC Town Twilight Invitational, clocking one of the top five times in history by a prep girl at the LaVern Gibson course in Indiana. In addition, she was victorious at the Champs Sports South Regional Championships and finished fifth at the Champs Sports National Championships, concluding her high school career as the top Kentucky finisher in 43 of the 44 cross country races she entered.

A member of the National Honor Society, O'Shea has donated her time as a tutor for younger students in several subjects. She's an active member of the St. Mark Catholic Youth Group, helping with yard maintenance during the summer on behalf of campus ministry in addition to assisting with several projects at local retirement homes. She also contributes to the school's PEP Club by organizing rallies and making decorations to support Madison Central teams at various sporting events. "Ciara O'Shea capped the most dominant and consistent career by any prep girl in Kentucky history, winning a memorable fifth straight 3A title and becoming the state's first All-American at the Champs Sports National Championships since 2014," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "In so doing, she achieved the second top-five performance by a girl from Kentucky in that meet's history."

O'Shea has maintained a weighted 4.35 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill 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.

Four-time winner O'Shea joins recent Gatorade Kentucky Girls Cross Country Player of the Year Karlee Hoffman (2018-19, Daviess County 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.

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