

**WAYZATA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Abbey Nechanicky** of **Wayzata High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Nechanicky is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Wayzata 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 Nechanicky as Minnesota'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, Nechanicky 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 senior raced to the Class 3A individual state championship this past season with a time of 16:47.61, leading the Trojans to the state title as a team. Nechanicky also won the Roy Griak Invitational, the St. Olaf Showcase and the St. Michael-Albertville Invitational as well as the Nike Heartland Regional Championships in South Dakota. She finished fourth at Nike Cross Nationals to earn All-America honors in her first trip to Oregon since 2018, when she was an eighth-grader racing at the varsity level.

A member of the National Honor Society, Nechanicky has devoted her senior project to coordinating a sock drive for the homeless, with more than 200 pairs being distributed this winter. She is also the Wayzata High School basketball team manager in addition to serving as a youth running camp counselor. Nechanicky is actively involved in Wayzata High School's Volunteer Club as well as being a Link Leader, helping new students transition smoothly to attending Wayzata High School. "Abbey Nechanicky was one of the feel-good stories of the fall, returning after being sidelined by injury during her junior season to produce one of the most memorable campaigns in Minnesota prep history and ascend to being one of the elite competitors in the country," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "Nechanicky's dominance in the biggest meets and on the most prestigious courses in the state was magnified by the outstanding depth of competitors that she separated herself from."

Nechanicky has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Colorado at Boulder 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.

Nechanicky joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Ali Weimer (2021-22, St. Michael-Albertville High School), Analee Weaver (2020-21 & 2019-20, Stillwater Area High School), and Emily Covert (2018-19, Washburn 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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