

**SUE CLEVELAND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Leah Futey** of **Sue Cleveland High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Futey is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Sue Cleveland 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 Futey as New Mexico'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, Futey 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.).

Also the state's 2019-20 Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-10 senior raced to the Class 5A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:17.41, leading the Storm to the state title as a team. Futey won seven races, including the New Mexico All-Star meet, the Los Alamos Invitational, the Rio Rancho Jamboree and the Albuquerque Public Schools Metro Championships. She also finished ninth in the 5K Sweepstakes race at the prestigious Desert Twilight Festival in Arizona.

Futey has a sister, Elle, with special needs and has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple Special Olympic events, most recently the Unified Marathon team. She has also donated her time at USATF New Mexico events in addition to participating in community service initiatives in association with her church youth group. "Futey is the top girls distance talent to represent the entire state of New Mexico since 2017-18 Gatorade GXC Player of the Year Amanda Mayoral led the Storm program," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "She was unbeaten against in-state competition last fall and her performance at the Desert Twilight Festival was the most significant result achieved by a New Mexico prep girl competitor all season."

Futey has maintained an A-minus average in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Syracuse University 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.

Two-time winner Futey joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Raylee Hunt (2021-22, St. Michael's High School), Laurynn Sisneros (2020-21, Eldorado High School), and Jasmine Turtle-Morales (2018-19, Eldorado 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.