

**BROWNSVILLE AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE PENNSYLVANIA 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 **Jolena Quarzo** of **Brownsville Area High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Quarzo is the first Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Brownsville Area 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 Quarzo as Pennsylvania'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, Quarzo 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-2 senior raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:11.3. Quarzo broke the tape at the Red, White and Blue Classic, along with the PIAA Foundation Invitational as well. She also won the Nike Northeast Regional Championships in New York to advance to Nike Cross Nationals in Oregon for the first time since her freshman campaign of 2019, improving by more than two minutes to finish 37th.

A member of the Brownsville Area High School Senior Cabinet, Quarzo has volunteered locally by planting flowers and cleaning up the local community, feeding the homeless, donating presents to hospital patients and reading to kindergarten students as part of the Reading Buddy Club. She has also served as a mentor at the annual Track and Field Day at an elementary school and has worked at a summer soccer camp. "Following back-to-back second-place finishes, Jolena Quarzo finally broke through to win the Class AA title this fall and was the only competitor across all classifications to run a sub-18:30 time on the challenging Hershey Parkview course," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "She used that performance to build momentum on her way to prevailing at the Nike Cross Northeast Regional in New York to advance to Nike Cross Nationals in Oregon."

Quarzo has maintained a 3.96 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at North Carolina State 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.

Quarzo joins recent Gatorade Pennsylvania Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Mia Cochran (2021-22 & 2020-21, Moon Area High School) and Marlee Starliper (2019-20 & 2018-19, Northern 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.