

**D.C. EVEREST SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Sara Mlodik** of **D.C. Everest Senior High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Mlodik is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from D.C. Everest Senior 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 Mlodik as Wisconsin'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, Mlodik 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 junior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:06.6. Mlodik also won the Wausau City Meet, the Old Abe Invitational, the Bulldog Invitational and the SPASH Invitational among her eight victories in 2022. She took 10th at the Nike Heartland Regional Championships in South Dakota and then returned home to Wisconsin to finish eighth at the Champs Sports Midwest Regional Championships. She became an All-American by finishing 15th at the Champs Sports National Championships in San Diego.

Mlodik has volunteered locally with Unified Pals, My Team Triumph, the Salvation Army and at an elementary school's annual Run and Play event. She is also actively involved in her church, participating in making food for homeless shelters, charity pasta dinners and the holiday bake sale, while also serving at the annual Sportsman Banquet fundraiser and helping to organize a Halloween party for children. As part of her student council activities, Mlodik has also helped develop and manage a donation station in D.C. Everest's cafeteria. With the assistance of her student council advisor and the school's food program manager, she created a system where students can donate food items and students who need more to eat can meet those needs by taking items from the station. "Mlodik became the first Wisconsin female athlete to earn All-America honors at the Champs Sports National Championships since 2015," said Erik Boal, an editor for DyeStat.com. "She also finished in the top 10 at both the Champs Sports Midwest and Nike Heartland Regional events."

Mlodik maintains a 4.00 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school 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.

Mlodik joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Lauren Pansegrau (2021-22, Middleton High School), Kora Malecek (2020-21 & 2019-20, Onalaska High School), and Genevieve Nashold (2018-19, Madison 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.

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