

**FORT COLLINS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE COLORADO BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 30, 2023) — In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Christian Groendyk** of **Fort Collins High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Groendyk is the first Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Fort Collins 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 Groendyk as Colorado's best high school boys cross country player. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced in February, Groendyk joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners, including Parker Wolfe (2020-21, Cherry Creek High School, Greenwood Village, Colo.), Nico Young (2019-20, Newbury Park High School, Newbury Park, Calif.), 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-7, 135-pound senior raced to victory at the Class 5A State Championships with a time of 15:13.50 this past season, pacing the Lambkins to ninth-place team finish. Groendyk also crossed the line first at four invitationals this past season, including a personal-best clocking of 14:48.0 at the Liberty Bell invite. He capped his campaign with a top-40 finish in the Boys Gold featured race at the Garmin RunningLane Championships in Alabama.

Groendyk has volunteered locally at the Larimer County Food Bank in addition to serving as a youth track coach at the Fort Collins Recreation Center. "When all was said and done, Christian Groendyk's legs authored one of the greatest seasons in Colorado history," said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. "The Princeton University-bound senior recorded the third-fastest time at the venerable Liberty Bell Invite, won one of the nation's largest meets—the Desert Twilight Festival in Arizona—and delivered the fastest all-class performance in winning the Class 5A state meet by 10 seconds."

Groendyk has maintained a weighted 4.10 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Princeton University this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track.

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.

Groendyk joins recent Gatorade Colorado Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Zane Bergen (2021-22, Niwot High School), Parker Wolfe (2020-21, Cherry Creek High School), and Cole Sprout (2019-20 & 2018-19, Valor Christian 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.