

**HINSDALE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS 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 **Daniel Watcke** of **Hinsdale Central High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Watcke is the first Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Hinsdale Central 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 Watcke as Illinois' 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, Watcke 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-11, 140-pound senior raced to an eighth-place finish at Nike Cross Midwest Regionals to spearhead the team's qualification to nationals, where it placed eighth as a club team. Watcke was the top finisher in six of eight races in 2022. His third-place finish at states led the Red Devils to a runner-up finish as a team in Class 3A.

Watcke has volunteered locally on behalf of the Ronald McDonald House of DuPage County in addition to donating his time to Feed My Starving Children and HCS Family Services. "Enjoying considerable team and individual success, University of Oregon-bound senior Daniel Watcke was a stalwart for Hinsdale Central's season-long success, culminating in an eighth-place finish running as a club team at Nike Cross Nationals," said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. "An All-Midwest Region selection, he posted wins at the Hornet-Red Devil Invitational and the West Suburban Silver Conference Championship."

Watcke has maintained a weighted 4.67 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Oregon 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.

Watcke joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Nick Falk (2021-22, New Trier High School), Drew Rogers (2020-21, Herscher High School), and Josh Methner (2019-20 & 2018-19, John Hersey 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.