

**DOWLING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 30, 2023) — In its 38<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Jackson Heidesch** of **Dowling Catholic High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Heidesch is the third Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Dowling Catholic 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 Heidesch as Iowa'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, Heidesch 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 6-foot-3, 155-pound senior raced to his second consecutive Class 4A individual state championship in a state meet record time of 14:56.7 this past season. Heidesch was unbeaten against in-state competition. He also established five course records and paced the Maroons to a second straight team title.

Heidesch has volunteered locally with the Special Olympics, the Meals from the Heartland program, the Central Iowa Shelter and a peer tutoring program. Battling Crohn's Disease since age 7, "Jackson Heidesch has overcome the condition to become among the most dominant runners in Iowa history," said PrepCalTrack.com editor Rich Gonzalez. "At Nike Cross Nationals, he saved his best for last in avenging his lone in-season loss by placing fifth to earn All-America status while facing the strongest field in prep history."

Heidesch has maintained a weighted 4.30 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Duke 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.

Heidesch joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Alex McKane (2021-22, Iowa City West High School), Nate Mueller (2020-21, Adel-Desoto-Minburn High School), Max Murphy (2019-20, Pleasant Valley High School), and Tim Sindt (2018-19, Ankeny 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).