

**SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE KANSAS 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 **Colby King** of **Saint Thomas Aquinas High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. King is the fifth Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Saint Thomas Aquinas 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 King as Kansas' 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, King 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-10, 135-pound senior raced to the Class 5A state championship with a time of 15:16.6. King's victory sparked the Saints to a runner-up finish as a team. He also placed 23rd at Nike Cross Nationals, narrowly missing All-America honors with the best finish by a Kansan at the event in 18 years.

King has volunteered locally at a food pantry and thrift store in addition to donating his time as a campus senior ambassador by performing outreach with district middle schools. "Colby King was 'pure money' when it mattered this past season, claiming the 5A state crown by blowout margin (32 seconds), then earning the fifth and final individual berth to Nike Cross Nationals from the highly competitive Heartland Region," said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. "The Iowa State University signee capped his season by taking 23rd at nationals."

King has maintained a weighted 3.95 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Iowa 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.

King joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Logan Seger (2021-22, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School), Daniel Harkin (2020-21 & 2019-20, Manhattan High School), and Ethan Marshall (2018-19, St. Thomas Aquinas 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).