

**SANDIA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Steven West** of **Sandia High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. West is the first Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Sandia 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 West as New Mexico'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 January, West 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-8, 125-pound senior raced to a national title at the Garmin RunningLane Championships Gold Race in Alabama. That victory came four weeks after West won the state title in New Mexico's highest classification with a time of 15:04.4. His win at states paced the Matadors to a seventh-place finish as a team in 5A.

West has volunteered locally on behalf of the Peer Helpers program, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Students Demand Action advocacy group seeking to eliminate gun violence. "Sandia High's Steven West delivered the race of his life in traveling to Alabama and winning the 282-runner feature race at the Garmin RunningLane Championships," said PrepCalTrack Editor Rich Gonzalez. "Also the Class 5A state champion, West was unbeaten during in-state competition, including victories at the Super Cinco, Cleveland and APS invitationals."

West has maintained a weighted 4.45 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

West joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Rendon Kuykendall (2021-22 & 2020-21, Hope Christian High School), Galvin Curley (2019-20, Navajo Pine High School), and Kashon Harrison (2018-19, Kirtland Central 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).

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