

**HILLIARD DAVIDSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 **Connor Ackley** of **Hilliard Davidson High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Ackley is the first Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Hilliard Davidson 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 Ackley as Ohio'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, Ackley 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, 150-pound senior raced to victory at the Division 1 state championships this past season with a time of 15:10.1, helping the Wildcats to a fifth place as a team. Ackley won all nine of his regular-season races, then closed the 2022 campaign as a double All-American with his performances at Nike Cross Nationals, where he took 18th, and the Champs Sports Nationals, where he finished fifth. He crossed the line fourth at the Nike Midwest regionals in a personal-best 14:29.5 to qualify for nationals.

Ackley has volunteered locally mentoring young athletes in association with his church community. "Connor Ackley's durability this season was truly remarkable," said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. "Well before the national meets arrived on the calendar, he'd endured an extensive schedule in which he emerged unbeaten, including the fastest all-divisions time in his state meet."

Ackley has maintained a weighted 4.53 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Syracuse 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.

Ackley joins recent Gatorade Ohio Boys Cross Country Players of the Year William Zegarski (2021-22, Little Miami High School), Nathan Moore (2020-21, Lake High School), Caleb Brown (2019-20, Shelby High School), and Conant Smith (2018-19, Middletown 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).