

**AMERICAN FORK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE UTAH 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 Simmons** of **American Fork High School** is the **2022-23 Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Simmons is the fifth Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from American Fork 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 Simmons as Utah'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, Simmons 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 junior raced to All-America honors by placing second at Nike Cross Nationals in a time of 14:51.7 this past season. Simmons broke course records in each of his last six races and won the Class 6A individual state championship while leading the Cavemen to the team title.

He has volunteered locally through church service projects benefiting the elderly and the homeless and is also an accomplished actor and singer. "Moving from Idaho to Utah and instantly competing in the most pressure-packed state and region in the nation (Southwest), Daniel Simmons delivered a MasterClass in achieving success," said PrepCalTrack.com editor Rich Gonzalez. "His continued improvement during the championship phase led American Fork to the 6A state title. At nationals, he produced the race of his life to place second at Nike Cross Nationals against a downright stacked field!"

Simmons has maintained a 3.98 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Simmons joins recent Gatorade Utah Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jefferson McMullin (2021-22, Lehi High School), Creed Thompson (2020-21, Skyridge High School), Carson Belnap (2019-20, Stansbury High School), and Luke Grundvig (2018-19, American Fork 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.