

**ST. ANTHONY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE ILLINOIS GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 22, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Isabella Keller** of **St. Anthony High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Keller is the second Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from St. Anthony High School.

The award, which celebrates the nation’s top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Keller as Illinois’ best high school girls cross country player. From CEOs and coaches to star athletes, Gatorade Player of the Year winners showcase the power of sport, touting an all-star group of alumni that includes Irene Riggs (2022-23, 2021-22 & 2020-21, Morgantown High School, Morgantown, W. Va.), Katelyn Tuohy (2019-20, 2018-19 & 2017-18, North Rockland High School, Thiels, N.Y.) and Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.).

The 4-foot-8 freshman won her first Class 1A state crown this past season with a time of 16:26.2 to complete an unbeaten 2023 campaign on three-mile courses. Keller’s state meet victory was the fastest all-class time of the day. She followed with breakout performances at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional, where she took third, and the NXN Final, where she finished eighth in 17:43.4 to earn Second Team All-America honors. She also broke five course records last fall, all of them previously held by her sister, Anna Sophia Keller, a two-time Gatorade State Player of the Year winner.

A member of the Spanish Club at her school, Keller has volunteered locally as a lector at her parish—the Sacred Heart Church—as well as for the Effingham Humane Society in addition to teaching youth swimming lessons. “Ninth grader Isabella Keller appears to be the future of girls cross country in Illinois,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “The St. Anthony High phenom made quite the statement last fall, winning eight of the 11 meets she entered capped by her breakthrough performance at the NXN Final. She proved that she’s the nation’s top freshmen and she ranks among the top distance talents regardless of class.”

Keller has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her sophomore 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.

Keller joins recent Gatorade Illinois Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Grace Schager (2022-23, Glenbard North High School), Ava Parekh (2021-22 & 2020-21, Latin School of Chicago) and Katelynne Hart (2019-20, Glenbard West High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

As part of Gatorade’s commitment to breaking down barriers in sport, every Player of the Year also receives a grant to donate to a social impact partner. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$4.9 million across more than 1,600 organizations.

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.

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