

**FOREST LAKE AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 **Norah Hushagen** of **Forest Lake Area High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hushagen is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Forest Lake Area 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 Hushagen as Minnesota’s 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 5-foot-7 junior raced to the Class AAA state championship this past season, breaking the tape in an all-class best time of 17:27.6. Hushagen followed with a regional title, winning the Nike Cross Heartland championship by clocking a personal-best 17:07.30—the fastest time by a Minnesota prep girl in 2023. She was also the state’s top finisher at the highly competitive Roy Griak Invitational, where she placed third overall.

A cello player in the Minnesota Sinfonia, Hushagen has volunteered locally on behalf of Kindness Rangers, an organization serving peers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors and teachers. She has also donated her time with Rangers Impacting Student Experiences (RISE), a drug and alcohol prevention and awareness group. “Norah Hushagen’s junior year was near perfection, finishing unbeaten against in-state rivals before cruising to a 33-second win at the Class AAA state meet,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “Her biggest race came at the Nike Cross Heartland Regionals, where she outlasted and out-leaned Kansan Katelyn Rupe to win the coveted interstate crown by a split second.”

Hushagen has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her 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.

Hushagen joins recent Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Abbey Nechanicky (2022-23, Wayzata High School), Ali Weimer (2021-22, St. Michael-Albertville High School) and Analee Weaver (2020-21 & 2019-20, Stillwater Area 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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