

**MYERS PARK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Mary Bonner Dalton** of **Myers Park High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Bonner Dalton is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Myers Park 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 Bonner Dalton as North Carolina’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-5 senior capped a spectacular prep distance career by taking fourth at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season to earn All-American honors. In qualifying for nationals, Dalton ran the second-fastest 5K in history by a North Carolina prep girl at the Foot Locker South regionals, clocking a personal-best 16:53.80 to finish sixth. At the Class 4A state meet, she broke the tape with a time of 16:54.06 to shatter the 27-year-old state meet record by 30 seconds. She finished the year ranked No. 8 nationally in the MileSplit 50.

Selected to represent her school as part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Student Athletic Advisory Council, Dalton is also a member of the International Baccalaureate Student Council and serves as a Mustang Ambassador for her school. She has volunteered locally on behalf of the Giving Back Committee and the Rotary International Interact Club. “Mary Bonner Dalton is now a two-time All-American in cross country who turned in back-to-back scorching performances in a three-week span at states and Foot Locker South,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCal Track. “She ran the fastest time on the state meet course since 1996 and she handily beat a bunch of state champions at nationals.”

Dalton has maintained a 4.69 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has signed a national letter of intent to run on scholarship at the University of Notre Dame 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.

Bonner Dalton joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Stella Kermes (2022-23, Cuthbertson High School), Sarah Mitchell (2021-22, Apex High School) and Carmen Alder (2020-2, 2019-20 & 2018-29, Pinecrest 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.

###