

**O'GORMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Libby Castelli** of **O'Gorman High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade South Dakota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Castelli is the third Gatorade South Dakota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from O'Gorman 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 Castelli as South Dakota'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-3 junior won the Division AA state meet this past season with a time of 17:31.91, breaking the tape 29.35 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Knights to a fifth-place finish as a team. Castelli, who also earned First Team All-State honors for the O'Gorman girls soccer team this fall, was the only state runner to qualify for a national championship race after her fourth-place finish at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships.

Castelli's sister, Katie, was the 2020-21 Gatorade State Girls Cross Country Player of the Year. She has volunteered locally at the St. Francis House, which works to lift people out of homelessness. She has also donated her time with Soccer Stars, an adaptive program for children with special needs. "Libby Castelli was the most dominant runner I saw this fall," said Matt Genrich, head coach of Harrisburg High. "Through the years I have been extremely impressed with her talent and willingness to be the perfect teammate. Her state meet performance, winning by [nearly] 30 seconds was unreal on a fairly breezy South Dakota day."

Castelli has maintained a 3.96 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.

Castelli joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Ali Bainbridge (2022-23, Lincoln High School & 2019-20, Lennox High School), Alea Hardie (2021-22, O'Gorman High School) and Katie Castelli (2020-21, O'Gorman 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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