

**RIDGEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CONNECTICUT BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 26, 2024) — In its 39th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Steven Hergenrother** of **Ridgefield High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hergenrother is the first Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Ridgefield 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 Hergenrother as Connecticut’s best high school boys 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 Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11 & 2009-10, Carl Sandburg High School, Ill.) and Edward Cheserek (2012-13, St. Benedict’s Preparatory School, N.J.).

The 5-foot-9, 140-pound senior raced to the bronze medal at the Nike Cross Northeast Regional Championships in a time of 15:53.7 this past season, earning his first berth to nationals, where he placed 29th. Hergenrother also won the New England Championships, leading the Tigers to the team title. In two other notable interstate successes, he took third in the featured race at the Manhattan Invitational and placed eighth in the Race of Champions at the Great American Cross Country Festival.

Hergenrother has volunteered more than 100 hours tutoring fellow students in Advanced Placement Physics, Calculus and Chemistry. Also treasurer and previously a senator student government, he worked with local businesses to multiply funding for the Bridgeport Field of Dream Foundation’s “Kicks For Kids” program, in initiative he earmarked through a grant received via Gatorade’s Play It Forward program after winning last year’s award. “Recognized as the team leader for a Ridgefield program that captured two State Open crowns and one runner-up plaque, Steven Hergenrother has been the region’s most consistent and successful distance talent in recent years,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “A two-time state individual champion—who this year claimed his first berth to nationals—he was the clear choice in winning his second consecutive Gatorade POY award.”

Hergenrother has maintained a 5.00 weighted GPA in the classroom. He will attend Princeton University this fall, where he will compete on the cross country and track teams.

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.

Two-time winner Hergenrother joins recent Gatorade Connecticut Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Gavin Sherry (2021-22, 2020-21, & 2019-20, Conard 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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