

**LEON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE FLORIDA BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 26, 2024) — In its 39<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Patrick Koon** of **Leon High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Koon is the third Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Leon 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 Koon as Florida'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-11, 135-pound senior outraced a stacked field to win the Foot Locker South Regional Championships this past season with a time of 14:48.61. Leading up to his regional title, Koon won his third consecutive Class 3A State Championship to complete an unbeaten season against in-state runners. He also took 15th at Foot Locker Nationals to sew up Third Team All-America honors.

A member of the National Honor Society and also student body vice president at his school, Koon has volunteered locally as part of the Strides For Seizures initiative, which raises funds for patient programs at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. He has also donated his time with the School of Arts and Sciences summer camp. "Despite being afflicted with a bout of mono in the postseason, Patrick Koon willed himself to excellence in remaining the state's premier talent this past season," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "A two-time Gatorade State Player of the Year selection, his lone loss came at Foot Locker Nationals, further solidifying his ranking among the best distance runners in Florida history."

Koon has maintained a 4.70 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Stanford University 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.

Two-time winner Koon joins recent Gatorade Florida Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Rheinhardt Harrison (2021-22 & 2020-21, Nease High School) and Ethan Geiger (2019-20, Robinson 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com) or follow us on social media on Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://facebook.com/GatoradePOY), Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://instagram.com/Gatorade) and Twitter at [twitter.com/Gatorade](https://twitter.com/Gatorade).

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