

**ANKENY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE IOWA 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 **Ethan Zuber** of **Ankeny High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Zuber is the second Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Ankeny 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 Zuber as Iowa'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, 140 pound junior broke the tape at the Class 4A State Championships with a personal-best time of 15:07.7 this past season, leading the Hawks to a third-place finish as a team. Zuber won 7 of 10 races he entered last fall. He also recorded marquee wins at the Rim Rock Classic and the Fort Dodge Invitational.

A member of his school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, Zuber has volunteered locally with the We Finish Together organization, which presents used race medals adorned with "Champion of the Day" inspirational messages to a community children's hospital. He has also donated his time assisting with food drives to help supply local food pantries. "Ethan Zuber was a model of consistency in 2023 as 90 percent of his races clocked in at 15:20 or faster," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "His seasonal 5K time average of 15:13 prior nationals was the fastest season ledger in state history."

Zuber has maintained a 4.06 weighted GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Zuber joins recent Gatorade Iowa Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Jackson Heidesch (2022-23, Dowling Catholic High School), Alex McKane (2021-22, Iowa City West High School), Nate Mueller (2020-21, Adel-Desoto-Minburn High School) and Max Murphy (2019-20, Pleasant Valley 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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