

**TRINITY ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE KANSAS 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 **Clay Shively** of **Trinity Academy** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Shively is the first Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Trinity Academy.

The award, which celebrates the nation's top high school athletes for excellence on the field, in the classroom and in the community, distinguishes Shively as Kansas' 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-10, 160-pound senior earned First Team All-Region honors by taking fifth at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional Championship this past season, clocking a personal-best time of 14:39.80. Shively also won the Class 3A state title, leading the Knights to the team championship. Ranked No. 8 in the national MileSplit 50 for 2023, he ran the fastest 5K by a Kansas prep boy last fall and also won the Championship Race at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational.

Shively plays guitar and sings while leading a praise and worship band for his church community. In addition, he travels to play in a worship collective each summer. He has also volunteered locally by serving as a middle school group leader on a weekly basis. "Clay Shively scorched his way to a state title and NXR First Team All-Region honors in a senior season to remember," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "His win at Roy Griak only elevates an already stellar Gatorade Player of the Year resume."

Shively has maintained a 3.48 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Northern Arizona University.

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.

Shively joins recent Gatorade Kansas Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Colby King (2022-23, St. Thomas Aquinas High School), Logan Seger (2021-22, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School) and Daniel Harkin (2020-21 & 2019-20, Manhattan 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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