

**GOVERNOR THOMAS JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MARYLAND 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 **James Partlow** of **Governor Thomas Johnson High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Partlow is the first Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Governor Thomas Johnson 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 Partlow as Maryland’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 6-foot, 135-pound senior won the Class 4A state meet this past season with a time of 15:39.28, breaking the tape 5.67 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. Partlow took fourth at the Nike Cross Southeast Regional Championships and capped his season by crossing the line in 16th at the Nike Cross Nationals to earn Third Team All-American honors.

A member of the Junior Naval ROTC Academy at his school, Partlow is the executive leader of his local chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through the Governor Thomas Johnson High School National Honor Society. “James Partlow is the best male runner that I’ve ever seen,” said Frank Strakonsky, head coach of Frederick High. “James has consistently demonstrated unparalleled commitment and dedication to the sport of cross country. He possesses an innate ability to push boundaries, both physically and mentally, and consistently delivered remarkable performances throughout the season.”

Partlow has maintained a weighted 4.67 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Partlow joins recent Gatorade Maryland Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Antonio Camacho-Bucks (2022-23 & 2021-22, Centennial High School), Jake Gelfand (2020-21, Severna Park High School) and Owen Johnson (2019-20, Calvert Hall College 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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