

**LINCOLN COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Isaac Rivera** of **Lincoln College Preparatory Academy** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Rivera is the first Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Lincoln College Preparatory 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 Rivera as Missouri’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-8, 125-pound senior finished fourth at the national RunningLane Cross Country Championships to earn First Team All-American honors this past season. Rivera also churned out a Second Team All-American performance by finishing fourth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, qualifying for the national title meet in the process. He also won the MSHSAA Class 4 state championship with a personal-best time of 14:54.60, leading the Blue Tigers to third place as a team.

Rivera has volunteered locally on behalf of Harvesters Food Bank and has also donated his time to the Academy Lafayette Middle School cross country and track programs. An active member of his United Methodist Church of the Resurrection Downtown community, he works as a sales outfitter for the Fleet Feet Kansas City Running Store. “Rivera used his PR at the state meet as a springboard to significant regional and national success,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “When the smoke cleared, his 2023 campaign was among the best in the Midwest.”

Rivera has maintained a 4.04 weighted GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at Iowa State 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.

Rivera joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Connor Burns (2022-23, Southern Boone High School), Andrew Hauser (2021-22, Rock Bridge High School), Matthew Hauser (2020-21, Rock Bridge High School) and Wes Porter (2019-20, Rockhurst 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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