

**BOZEMAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MONTANA 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 **Nathan Neil** of **Bozeman High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Neil is the seventh Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Bozeman 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 Neil as Montana'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, 158-pound senior earned All-American honors by finishing third at Nike Cross Nationals this past season. Neil's time of 15:18.6 was only 2.1 seconds behind the winner. He also won the Class AA state meet in 14:45.47, breaking the tape 41.75 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Hawks to a second-place finish as a team. He followed that by winning the Nike Cross Northwest Regional Championships by more than 15 seconds.

Neil is a member of his school's Project Connect, which promotes a culture of compassion and inclusion. He has volunteered locally as part of multiple community service initiatives through his church youth group. "Let me tell you, I am glad he's graduating," said Kelley Gilbert, head coach of Helena High School. "Nathan is a physical specimen who is both strong and very fast. He could win a race by running it in a number of different ways."

Neil has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at the University of Washington 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.

Neil joins recent Gatorade Montana Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Weston Brown (2022-23, Bozeman High School), Tanner Klumph (2021-22, Sentinel High School), Stirling Marshall-Pryde (2020-21, Bozeman High School) and Simon Hill (2019-20, Glacier 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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