

**WANDO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 **Jake Liebert** of **Wando High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Liebert is the first Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Wando 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 Liebert as South Carolina’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, 130-pound senior broke the tape at the Class AAAAA state meet this past season, winning by more than 27 seconds in a time of 15:19.79 and leading Warriors to third place as a team. Top-five finishes at two of the nation’s premier invitationals—the Great American Cross Country Festival and the Southern Showcase—plus a First Team All-Region performance at the Foot Locker South Championships were among Liebert’s season highlights. He took 11th at the national Foot Locker championships to earn Third Team All-America honors.

A guitar enthusiast who also enjoys cooking in his free time, Liebert has volunteered locally as a youth coach for the Mt. Pleasant Track Club. He has also mentored the community’s middle school population in the sport of cross country as well as track and field. “Liebert earned All-American status at the national Foot Locker championships, turned in an impressive showing as the top South Carolina finisher at Great American (4th) and led his team to bronze at the state meet,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “He closed out his prep career in style.”

Liebert has maintained a 3.66 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to run on scholarship at University of Tennessee 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.

Liebert joins recent Gatorade South Carolina Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Knox Young (2022-23, Greenville High School), Sam Rich (2021-22 & 2020-21, Catawba Ridge High School) and Coen Roberts (2019-20, Greer 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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