

**ONALASKA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Manny Putz** of **Onalaska High School** is the **2023-24 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Putz is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Onalaska 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 Putz as Wisconsin'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-6, 130-pound junior powered across the line to take fifth at Nike Cross Nationals Final this past season, clocking a time of 15:23.1 to earn First Team All-America honors. Putz, a two-time Gatorade award winner, also won the Division 1 state meet for a second successive season, recording the fastest all-class time of the day. He won seven of his 10 races last fall and his 14:32.1 at the NXR Heartland meet, where he took silver, was a personal-best.

Putz has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Drive—a Thanksgiving and Christmas campaign to raise funds for those in need. He has also donated his time to Rotary Lights, a holiday light show that encourages attendees to make donations to feed the hungry. "Perhaps the biggest surprise on the national stage, Manny Putz capped off a strong campaign with a surprising top-five finish at NXN," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "The addition of another state championship and a First Team All-Region showing gave him the state's best racing resume in 2023."

Putz has maintained a 3.89 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his senior year of high school 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.

Two-time winner Putz joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Shane Griepentrog (2021-22, Valders High School), Joshua Truchon (2020-21, Nathan Hale High School) and Jake Krause (2019-20, University 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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