

**THE TATNALL SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 16, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Katie Payne** of **The Tatnall School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Payne is the fifth Gatorade Delaware **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from The Tatnall School.

Gatorade Player of the Year is the top honor in high school sports, celebrating the nation’s best high school athletes for their success on the field, in the classroom and in the community. The award distinguishes Payne as Delaware’s best high school girls cross country athlete, and she joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, Ca.), Katelyn Tuohy (2017-18, 2018-19 & 2019-20, North Rockland High School, N.Y.) and Addison Ritzenhein (2023-24, Niwot High School, Co.).

The 5-foot-10 senior won the Division 2 state meet this past season with a time of 17:37.6, breaking the tape 38 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Hornets to the team title. Payne earned First Team All-Region honors by taking fourth at the Nike Cross Southeast Regional Championships and finished undefeated against in-state competition. She is a six-time Division II state champion with the Tatnall indoor and outdoor track teams.

A three-time Gold Key Award Scholastic Art & Writing recipient, Payne is a cellist in The Tatnall Choral Orchestra. She has volunteered locally as a school ambassador and as a member of The Tatnall student council. She has also donated her time at a youth summer art camp. “Katie is one of the best runners I’ve seen at this level,” said Richard Loeper-Viti, head coach of Tower Hill School. “She has range because she’s equally talented in the 5K and the mile. She also races with a desire to win. She’s not afraid to win from the front.”

Payne has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Virginia this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states across 12 different high school sports – 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.

Payne joins recent Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Brynn Crandell (2023-24, 2022-23 & 2021-22, Indian River High School) and Tiffany Herrera (2020-21, St. Mark's 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, the Gatorade Player of the Year program has provided more than \$5.6 million in grants to winners across more than 2,000 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 Instagram at [instagram.com/Gatorade](https://www.instagram.com/Gatorade), Facebook at [facebook.com/GatoradePOY](https://www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY) and X(Twitter) at x.com/Gatorade.