

**PELLA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE IOWA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (January 16, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Marissa Ferebee** of **Pella High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Iowa Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Ferebee is the first Gatorade Iowa **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Pella High 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 Ferebee as Iowa’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-5 junior finished seventh at the NXN Nationals Final this past season, clocking a time of 17:16.40 to earn First Team All-American honors. Ferebee qualified for nationals by breaking the tape at the NXN Heartland Regional in a personal-best 16:25.50. She also won the Class 3A state championship, leading the Dutch to the team title. The owner of Iowa’s girls prep 5K state record, she won nine of her 10 races last fall and ranked No. 8 nationally in both the Dyestat 100 and the MileSplit 50.

A member of her school’s student council, Ferebee has volunteered locally on behalf of her church and the Tulip Time Festival. She has also donated her time as a youth soccer referee and works as a lifeguard during the summer. “Ferebee put together one of the best campaigns in the country in 2024,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “She ran a blistering race to win the Nike Heartland Regional and she captured an individual and team state title.”

Ferebee has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her 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 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.

Ferebee joins recent Gatorade Iowa Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Addison Dorenkamp (2023-24 & 2021-22, Valley High School), Paityn Noe (2022-23, Ballard High School) and Danielle Hostetler (2020-21, Mid-Prairie 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](http://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](https://x.com/Gatorade).