

**NEEDHAM HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MASSACHUSETTS 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 **Greta Hammer** of **Needham High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Hammer is the first Gatorade Massachusetts **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Needham 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 Hammer as Massachusetts' 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 junior won the Division 1A state meet this past season with a time of 18:13.91, breaking the tape more than 43 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Rockets to the team title. Hammer also won the MIAA Meet of Champions by nearly 14 seconds and paced all Massachusetts runners by taking 25th at the national NXN Final and finishing second at the NXN Northeast Regional, earning First Team All-Region honors in the process. She clocked a personal-best 17:31.97 in winning the Bay State Conference title in October.

A team captain, Hammer has volunteered as a member of School The World, which involved a trip to Panama that included over 100 service hours. She has also served as a member of her school's Environmental and German clubs. "There's no question in my mind that Greta Hammer was the most impressive athlete in the state this season," said Joanna Mantel, Newton North High School head coach. "Speaking as a program that sees her multiple times throughout the season, she continually impressed me with her clear dominance on both fast, rolling courses as well as the toughest course in the state at Northfield Mountain. She was always a team player, who led a very strong Needham team to a Division 1A championship, and then chose to run with them at Nike Cross Regionals instead of going for individual glory at Foot Locker on our local Franklin Park course, where she would have been favored."

Hammer has maintained a 3.94 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.

Hammer joins recent Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Aoife Shovlin (2023-24, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School), Meg Madison (2022-23 & 2021-22, The Winsor School) and Carmen Luisi (2020-21, Holliston 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.

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