

## **WILLIAM FLOYD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Zariel Macchia** of **William Floyd High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Macchia is the first Gatorade New York **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from William Floyd 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 Macchia as New York'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 NYSPHSAA Class A state title this past season, racing to a season-best time of 17:24.7 to earn All-State honors for a fourth consecutive year. Macchia earned Third Team All-America honors by crossing the line in 19<sup>th</sup> place at the Nike Cross Nationals Final, clocking a 17:44.6. The state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, she also took third at the Foot Locker National Championships in California, earning her First Team All-America recognition. She closed out her prep distance career by winning the U20 race at the USATF Cross Country Championships earlier this month.

Macchia helped establish an ecological and environmental center for her community and has volunteered locally as part of multiple Science Bowl events geared toward low-income and students of color. Highly gifted academically, she has also donated her time tutoring top college-bound student-athletes who are older than her. "Zariel Macchia finishes her prep hill-and-dale career as not just one of the premier talents in New York State history, but also among the most decorated national talents ever," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "A five-time All-American, she also became only the third four-time All-American in the 45-year history of the Foot Locker Championship meet. In terms of both durability and excellence, hers is a career that future runners will find almost impossible to match."

Macchia has maintained an A average in the classroom. She has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run cross country and track at Brigham Young University 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.

Two-time winner Macchia joins recent Gatorade New York Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Karrie Baloga (2022-23 & 2021-22, Cornwall Central High School) and Brooke Rauber (2020-21, Tully 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).

###