

## **CAROLINA DAY SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 **Caroline Barton** of **Carolina Day School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Barton is the first Gatorade North Carolina **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Carolina Day 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 Barton as North Carolina’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 senior won the NCISAA Class 3A state this past season with a meet-record time of 17:33.8, breaking the tape 87 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor. Barton earned First Team All-Region honors by taking second at the Foot Locker South Regional Championships, clocking a personal-best 16:59.49. She also finished 18th at Foot Locker nationals in 18:23.0.

Passionate about social justice and DEI initiatives, Barton has served on the advisory board of You Belong, an on-campus club geared toward developing themes and creating school-wide activities promoting equity. She has volunteered locally as an acolyte and server at Trinity Episcopal Church. She also founded StriveTogetherNC, an on-campus advocacy group raising awareness about high dropout rates among girls student-athletes. “Confronted by midseason tragedy brought to the region by destructive Hurricane Helene, Caroline Barton overcame all the uncertainty to regain focus, eventually delivering one of the greatest distance campaigns in state history,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “An Honorable Mention All-American, she became the state’s third female in history to crack 17 minutes on the historic McAlpine Park course. Her victory by nearly 90 seconds smashed the independent schools championship meet course record.”

Barton has maintained a weighted 4.86 GPA in the classroom. She will attend Princeton University this fall, where she will run cross country and track.

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.

Barton joins recent Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Mary Bonner Dalton (2023-24, Myers Park High School), Stella Kermes (2022-23, Cuthbertson High School), Sarah Mitchell (2021-22, Apex High School) and Carmen Alder (2020-21, Pinecrest 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).

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