

**BISMARCK CENTURY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED  
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 **Ruby Ihmels** of **Bismarck Century High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Player of the Year**. Ihmels is the third Gatorade North Dakota **Girls Cross Country** Player of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck Century 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 Ihmels as North Dakota’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-4 sophomore earned First Team All-American honors this past season by taking fourth at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships with a time of 17:50.5. Ihmels qualified for nationals by finishing sixth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional Championships, one week after she was the runner-up at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships. That earned her First Team All-Region at both events. A transfer from Timberline High School (Idaho), she broke the tape in the Class A state meet with a time of 17:28.1, crossing the line more than 80 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Patriots to fourth place as a team.

A writer for the Literature Magazine at Century High School, Ihmels has volunteered locally as a marshal at middle school and youth cross country and track meets. “Ruby is so dominant because she refuses to lose,” said Chase Gregory, head coach of Williston High School. “Nobody was close to her all season long.”

Ihmels has maintained a weighted 4.11 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her junior 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.

Ihmels joins recent Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Players of the Year Brynn Hanson (2023-24, Des Lacs-Burlington High School), Jaelyn Ogle (2022-23, Watford City High School), Eleni Lovgren (2021-22, Williston High School) and Meghan Ford (2020-21, Jamestown 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).