

NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE ILLINOIS BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (February 13, 2025) — In its 40th year of honoring the nation's most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Ben Crane** of **New Trier High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Crane is the second Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from New Trier 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 Crane as Illinois' best high school boys cross country athlete, and he joins an impressive group of alumni that spans CEOs, coaches and star athletes such as Lukas Verzbicas (2009-10 & 2010-11, Carl Sandburg High School, Illinois), Edward Cheserek (2012-13, St. Benedict's Preparatory School, New Jersey) and Daniel Simmons (2022-23 & 2023-24, American Fork High School, Utah).

The 5-foot-10, 145-pound senior won the IHSA Class 3A state meet this past season in personal-best 14:03.4 for three miles, breaking the tape 8.4 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Trevians to sixth place as a team. A two-time All-State selection, Crane earned Second Team All-America honors at both the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, where he finished sixth, and the national NXN Final, where he took 14th. He also clocked a 5K personal-best of 14:46.03 last fall in winning the NXN Midwest Regional, which was a course-record time on the LaVern Gibson Championship layout.

A member of the New Trier Sports Medicine Club, Crane has volunteered locally with the Active Hearts Foundation and through the Wilmette Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as a youth leader and as an altar boy for Sunday services. He has also donated his time with Special Olympics Buddy Baseball by assisting special needs athletes and on behalf of the New Trier XC Run-A-Thon, raising more than \$1,000 for the Greater Chicago Food Depository. "Ben Crane was absolutely dominant in 2024, never losing to an in-state foe," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "A dual All-American this past fall, he clocked the fastest time in history by an Illinois prep boy on the famed LaVern Gibson Course at NXN regionals."

Crane has maintained a 3.83 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run 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.

Crane joins recent Gatorade Illinois Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Aden Bandukwala (2023-24, Hinsdale Central High School), Daniel Watcke (2022-23, Hinsdale Central High School), Nick Falk (2021-22, New Trier High School) and Drew Rogers (2020-21, Herscher 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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