

**ROCKHURST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 **Henry Acorn** of **Rockhurst High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Acorn is the third Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Rockhurst 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 Acorn as Missouri’s 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, 140-pound senior finished sixth at the NXN Midwest Regional this past season, clocking a 15:03.44 to earn First Team All-Region honors. A four-time All-State selection, Acorn broke the tape at the MSHSAA Class 5 state meet in a personal-best time of 14:52.40, leading the Hawklets to the team title. He was the top Missouri runner at the Forest Park XC Festival, where he took second and he crossed the line 60th at the national NXN Final.

A member of his school’s French, coffee, vinyl records and Giving Grove clubs, Acorn has volunteered locally by cleaning up city parks and by teaching kids to read. He has also donated his time as a middle school track coach. “Henry Acorn didn’t lose to an in-state runner last fall and was substantially faster than anyone else in any class at the state meet,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. “His run at NXN Midwest was a signature moment in a great prep distance career.”

Acorn has maintained a weighted 4.18 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Virginia 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.

Acorn joins recent Gatorade Missouri Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Isaac Rivera (2023-24, Lincoln College Preparatory Academy), Connor Burns (2022-23, Southern Boone High School), Andrew Hauser (2021-22, Rock Bridge High School) and Matthew Hauser (2020-21, Rock Bridge 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.