

RIO RANCHO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE NEW MEXICO 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 **Charlie Vause** of **Rio Rancho High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Vause is the first Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Rio Rancho 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 Vause as New Mexico'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 state's returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 6-foot-1, 147-pound senior won the national NXN Final this past season with a time of 15:28.1, breaking the tape 2.5 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor in becoming the state's first prep distance national champion in history. Vause raced to a second-place finish at the NMAA Class 5A state meet, leading the Rams to the team championship. He clocked a personal-best of 14:30.2 last fall when he took bronze at the NXN Southwest Regional.

Vause has volunteered locally on behalf of his church youth group as well as the Big Event, New Mexico's largest community service project for neighbors in need. He has also donated his time to RunFit road races in the area. In addition, he works as a swim instructor at the Rio Rancho Aquatic Center twice a week. "In an era where elevated competition and increased top-tier racing opportunities flood the national landscape, peaking at the right time has become a more elusive goal," said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack. "Charlie Vause delivered, rounding into red-hot form at the national championships to separate himself from a talent-stacked lineup of racers."

Vause has maintained a 4.17 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the 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 Vause joins recent Gatorade New Mexico Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Steven West (2022-23, Sandia High School) and Rendon Kuykendall (2021-22 & 2020-21, Hope Christian 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.