

**HORACE GREELEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW YORK 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 **Ryan Sykes** of **Horace Greeley High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade New York Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Sykes is the first Gatorade New York Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Horace Greeley 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 Sykes as New York’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-9, 120-pound sophomore won the NYSPHSAA Class A state meet this past season, clocking a 5K personal-best time of 15:05.0 to win by half a second in with the fastest all-class run of the meet. Sykes also won the NY Federation Championships at the NXN Northeast Regional, the first year the meet has served as a hybrid championship. He won eight of 13 races last fall.

Vice president of his school’s Sports Nutrition Club, Sykes has volunteered locally as a youth swim coach at the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester. He has also donated his time assisting at community road races. “A best-of-meet performance at the state championships followed by equally impressive showing at his nationals qualifier meet thrust Ryan Sykes into the spotlight as one of the premier underclass talents in America this past season,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack.

Sykes has maintained a 4.00 GPA in the classroom. He will begin his 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.

Sykes joins recent Gatorade New York Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Nolan McGinn (2023-24, Fayetteville-Manlius High School), Collin Gilstrap (2022-23, Monroe-Woodbury High School), Gitch Hayes (2021-22, La Salle Institute) and Peyton Geehrer (2020-21, Fayetteville-Manlius 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.