

**STILLWATER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE OKLAHOMA 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 **Mez Barth** of **Stillwater High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Barth is the second Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Stillwater 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 Barth as Oklahoma'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 6-foot-1, 147-pound senior finished 24th at the National RunningLane Cross Country Championships this past season with a time of 15:13.84, fastest among Oklahoma runners. A three-time state medalist, Barth took second at the OSSAA Class 6A state meet last fall and also placed 5th as the state’s top runner at the Cowboy Jamboree. He clocked a 5K personal-best of 15:02.46 in winning the COAC/MMSAC meet.

An avid gardener who plans to pursue a degree in horticulture in college, Barth has volunteered locally at Our Daily Bread Food Pantry, a food and resource center for community members in need. He has also donated his time in the Humane Society animal shelter and his local public library in association with his Boy Scouts Troop 802. “Mez Barth displayed first-class consistency throughout 2024, including finishing as the state’s top performer at the Cowboy Jamboree and the national RunningLane Cross Country Championships, his biggest challenges on the calendar last fall,” said Rich Gonzalez of PrepCalTrack.

Barth has maintained a weighted 4.02 GPA in the classroom. He remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Barth joins recent Gatorade Oklahoma Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Brody Woodcock (2023-24, Deer Creek High School), Andrew Smithwick (2022-23, Lincoln Christian High School), A.J. Antonelli (2021-22, Deer Creek High School) and Gabe Simonsen (2020-21, Mustang 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.