

## **LA SALLE ACADEMY STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE RHODE ISLAND BOYS CROSS COUNTRY PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

**CHICAGO** (February 13, 2025) — In its 40<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation’s most elite high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Marshall Vernon** of **La Salle Academy** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Vernon is the third Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from La Salle Academy.

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 Vernon as Rhode Island’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 junior won the Rhode Island Interscholastic League state meet this past season with a time of 15:00.75, breaking the tape 11 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Rams to third place as a team. Vernon also won Rhode Island’s Class A state meet with a time of 15:29.38. A two-time All-State selection, he took second at the New England Cross Country Championships and fourth at the NXN Northeast Regional to advance to the NXN Final.

An avid photographer, Vernon has volunteered locally as a student mentor at De La Salle Middle School and is a member of La Salle Academy’s Scholars Program. “Marshall ran a fabulous race at the state meet with a win and a PR,” said Amy Noecker, head coach at Mount Saint Charles Academy. “Then, he placed second at New England’s and also won his race at Manhattan College, finishing with another (2.5 mile) PR.”

Vernon has maintained an A average in the classroom. He will begin his senior 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.

Vernon joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Sam Henderson (2023-24, Cumberland High School), Devan Kipyego (2022-23 & 2021-22, St. Raphael Academy) and Jack McLoughlin (2020-21, La Salle Academy), 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](http://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](https://x.com/Gatorade).