

WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED GATORADE SOUTH DAKOTA 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 **Cole Reilly** of **Washington High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Reilly is the second Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Washington 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 Reilly as South Dakota’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, 150-pound sophomore won the Division AA state meet this past season with a time of 15:47.13, breaking the tape just under a second ahead of his next-closest competitor and leading the Warriors to third place as a team. Reilly clocked a 5K personal-best of 15:17.42 last fall and took fourth at Minnesota’s Roy Griak Invitational in 16:41.10, representing the state’s top finisher. He also placed 58th at the Nike Cross Heartland Regional Championships.

Reilly has volunteered locally with Project Warm-Up, which distributes blankets to those in need and at a nursing home. He has also donated his time as a youth basketball coach. “Cole is one of the toughest and grittiest runners I’ve coached against,” said Jason Wagoner, head coach of Jefferson High School. “He shows maturity beyond his age, running like a veteran. Anyone that beats him in a race, he makes them earn it. He’s not afraid to get to the front of the field and push the pace.”

Reilly has maintained a 3.31 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.

Reilly joins recent Gatorade South Dakota Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Luke Rupert (2023-24, Hill City High School), Simeon Birnbaum (2022-23 & 2021-22, Stevens High School) and Isaac Davelaar (2020-21, Sioux Falls 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.