

**ONALASKA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE WISCONSIN 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 **Manny Putz** of **Onalaska High School** is the **2024-25 Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Player of the Year**. Putz is the first Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Onalaska 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 Putz as Wisconsin’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 two-time returning Gatorade Player of the Year, the 5-foot-7, 132-pound senior won his third straight WIAA Division 1 state title this past season with a time of 15:07.5, crossing the line 1.7 seconds ahead of his next-closest competitor. One of only three Division 1 runners in history to win three state crowns, Putz finished second at November’s NXN Heartland Regional to qualify for the national NXN Final, where he took 28th. He also earned Second Team All-Region recognition with his 11th-place showing at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional.

Putz has volunteered locally on behalf of the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Drive—a holiday season campaign to raise funds for those in need. He has also donated his time to Rotary Lights, a holiday light show that encourages attendees to make donations to feed the hungry. “Manny Putz missed All-American status by six seconds at nationals, but didn’t miss a beat anywhere else last fall, clocking the fastest all-divisions time at the state meet and earning All-Region honors at both NXN Heartland and Foot Locker Midwest. No prep boy in Wisconsin was better last fall.”

Putz has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a written letter of athletic aid to run at the University of Wisconsin 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.

Three-time winner Putz joins recent Gatorade Wisconsin Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Shane Griepentrog (2021-22, Valders High School) and Joshua Truchon (2020-21, Nathan Hale 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.