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**MALIBU HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE CALIFORNIA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 29, 2018) — In its 33rd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Claudia Lane of Malibu High School as its 2017-18 Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Lane was the first Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Malibu High School when she won the honor her sophomore year (2016-17).

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Lane as California's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in January, Lane joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep., San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-2 junior raced to her second consecutive national title at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships this past season, breaking the tape in 17:03.4. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Lane won the Division 4 individual state championship with a course-record time of 16:30.3. She also finished first at the Foot Locker West Regional championship in a course-record time of 16:59.6 and earned victories at the prestigious Mt. SAC Invitational, the Ventura County championships and the Southern Section championships.

Founder of the Every Elephant Matters club at her school, Lane has volunteered locally on behalf of the National Charity League, Upward Bound House and the Fauna Foundation. "Claudia's natural gifts could have her relaxing on her laurels, but that's not who she is," said Malibu coach Mark Larsen. "No one works harder and longer than Claudia at practice. She is constantly trying to improve herself, not only by getting stronger, but getting smarter as to how she races."

Lane has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She will begin her 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 that sanction high school 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 work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Two-time winner Lane stands with Gatorade California Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Cate Ratliff (2015-16, Santa Cruz High School), Fiona O'Keeffe (2014-15, Davis High School), Sarah Baxter (2013-14, 2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Simi Valley High School), Molly Grabill (2009-10, Rancho Bernardo), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Prep. High School), and Jordan Hasay (2007-08, Mission College Prep.) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Lane will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program. Every Gatorade Player of the Year state winner receives a \$1,000 grant to donate and will have the opportunity to enter for an additional \$10,000 spotlight grant by writing a brief essay explaining why their selected organization deserves additional support. 12 spotlight grants - one for each sport - will be announced throughout the year.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow the conversation on Twitter #GatoradePOY. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit <http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com/>.

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