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**ASCENSION EPISCOPAL SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE LOUISIANA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 23, 2017) — In its 32nd year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Kirsten Landry of Ascension Episcopal School as its 2016-17 Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Landry is the first Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Ascension Episcopal School.

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 Landry as Louisiana'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/February, Landry 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-1 senior won her second LHSAA Class 1A title this past season, breaking the tape in 18:42.90 over three miles to finish 41.6 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor, leading the Blue Gators to eighth place as a team. Landry was unbeaten in 2016 and clocked both the fastest 3-mile (17:44.80) and 5K (18:37) in state history.

A Community Service Prefect for her school each of the past two years, Landry has made the Headmaster's academic list every semester of high school and is a three-time winner of the AES Math book award. An Academic All-State selection, she has also volunteered locally helping to coordinate the AES Community Service Day in addition to donating her time to Calvary Chapel's children's ministry since 2015. "Kirsten established a goal to become the best and then followed through with a workout schedule that helped her achieve this goal," said AES head coach Jason Guidry. "She also serves as team captain and is a great role model for her teammates in demonstrating that any goal is achievable if you are willing to put forth the effort. She exemplifies what a student-athlete should be."

Landry has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. She has signed a National Letter of Intent to run cross country on scholarship at Louisiana State University 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.

Landry joins Gatorade Louisiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Gabrielle Jennings (2015-16, 2014-15, 2013-14 & 2012-13, First Baptist Christian School), Anna Katherine Devitt (2011-12, Christian Life Academy), Kaitlin Flattmann (2010-11, Benton High School), and Malia Cali (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, St. Thomas Aquinas High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a Gatorade Player of the Year, Landry 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 us on Twitter. 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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