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**DR. PHILLIPS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE FLORIDA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 10, 2013) — In its 28th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Bridget Blake of Dr. Phillips High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Blake is the first Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Dr. Phillips High 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 Blake as Florida'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, Blake joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ryan Hall (1999-00, 2000-01, Big Bear HS, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.) and Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.).

The 5-foot-8 senior raced to her third consecutive Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:53. Blake took sixth at the Foot Locker South Regional championships, in 17:12, and finished 15th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships, earning All-American honors.

Blake has maintained a 4.32 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of the Fellowship of Christian athletes, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

"She won the state meet easily and wasn't pushed at all," said Kristin McWilliams, head coach at rival Winter Park High. "I've coached against her for four years and I think she's a great ambassador for the sport. She shows fantastic sportsmanship towards other athletes, and she's a great role model."

Blake has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Florida State University beginning 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 high school sports leadership team in partnership with [USA TODAY High School Sports](#), 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.

Blake joins Gatorade Florida Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Olivia Ortiz (2011-12, Lakewood Ranch High School), Kathryn Fluehr (2010-11 & 2009-10, The Community School of Naples), and Ashley Brasovan (2008-09 & 2007-08, Wellington) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

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 playeroftheyear.gatorade.com.

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