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**MELBA HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE IDAHO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 10, 2013) — In its 28<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Sierra Manzer of Melba High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Manzer is the first Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Melba 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 Manzer as Idaho'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, Manzer 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-2 sophomore raced to a Class 2A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:34.98, leading the Mustangs to a second place finish as a team. A 2012 First Team All-State selection, Manzer earned 12th place at the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships, crossing the line in 18:48.1. She also placed 16th at the Foot Locker West Regional championships in 19:07.

Manzer has maintained a 3.87 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally in association with multiple community clean-up initiatives, on behalf of her church youth group and as a youth basketball camp counselor.

"Sierra Manzer is a tremendous competitor and great team leader for our program," said Melba High head coach Conrad Evanow. "She is truly an outstanding individual."

Manzer will begin her 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 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.

Manzer joins Gatorade Idaho Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Emily Nist (2011-12, Bishop Kelly High School), Kinsey Gomez (2010-11 & 2009-10, Coeur d'Alene High School), Liz Brandon (2008-09, Eagle), and Nicole Nielsen (2007-08, Borah) 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](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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