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**HIGH POINT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE NEW JERSEY 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 Sarah Disanza of High Point Regional High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade New Jersey Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Disanza is the first Gatorade New Jersey Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from High Point Regional 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 Disanza as New Jersey'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, Disanza 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 senior raced to the state Meet of Champions individual title this past season with a time of 17:47. Disanza also won the Group 2 state title with a time of 18:29, took third at the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships, in 18:16.1, and finished 10th at the NXN Final, in 19:48.

Disanza has maintained a 3.90 GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered as a peer counselor and as an instructor for youth members at her local YMCA.

"When Sarah sets her mind to accomplish something, there is nothing that will slow her down," said High Point head coach Lisabeth Sunda. "She has all the characteristics one looks for in a student athlete, and she demonstrates strong leadership skills in school, out of school and on the course."

Disanza remains undecided upon a collegiate destination.

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.

Disanza joins Gatorade New Jersey Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Holly Bischof (2011-12, Bishop Eustace Preparatory School), Megan Venables (2010-11, Highland Regional High School), Chelsea Ley (2009-10, Kingsway Regional) and Melanie Thompson (2008-09 & 2007-08, Voorhees) 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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