

Contact: Lauren Rollins (312-729-3607)

**BISMARCK HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH DAKOTA 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 Brittany Brown Otter of Bismarck High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Brown Otter is the first Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Bismarck 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 Brown Otter as North Dakota'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, Brown Otter 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 junior raced the Class A individual state championship this past season with a time of 14:47.8, leading the Demons to the state title as a team. A three-time All-State qualifier, Brown Otter placed 13th at the Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships in 18:36.56. She ran seven regular-season meets, winning five, and placing second at the Western Dakota Association Championships in addition to clocking the state's top time at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational, crossing the line in 12th.

Also a track standout, Brown Otter has maintained a B average in the classroom. In addition to donating her time on behalf of her church's youth group, she has volunteered at Bismarck's elementary and middle school meets for the past three years.

"Brittany has shown a desire and passion to consistently improve each year in the cross country program, and because of the goals she has set for herself, she was rewarded with a team and individual championship in 2012," said Bismarck head coach Scott Reichenberger. "She works as hard as anyone and is willing to sacrifice to accomplish her goals."

Brown Otter 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 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.

Brown Otter joins Gatorade North Dakota Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Tarin Lachowitz (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, Davies High School), Alissa Mears (2008-09, West Fargo) and Lindsay Anderson (2007-08, Leeds) 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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