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**OAKWOOD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE OHIO 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 Mary Kate Vaughn of Oakwood High School as its 2012-13 Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Vaughn is the first Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Oakwood 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 Vaughn as Ohio'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, Vaughn 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-3 freshman raced to the Division II individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:41.57. A 2012 First Team All-State selection, Vaughn earned fourth place at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships, crossing the line in 18:08.8, qualifying for the NXN Final, where she earned 27th place in 20:21. She was also the fastest Ohio competitor at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships, finishing 15th with a time of 18:03.

Vaughn has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Junior Honor Society and a devoted parishioner in her church community, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Society to benefit the needy.

"Mary Kate Vaughn is a truly gifted runner," said Dan Lancianese, head coach at St. Vincent-St. Mary High. "It is amazing how impressive she is at such a young age. She has the mental fortitude to be even better than she is. She could be the best female distance runner to ever emerge from Ohio."

Vaughn will begin her sophomore year of high school 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.

Vaughn joins Gatorade Ohio Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Claudia Saunders (2011-12, Princeton High School), Michelle Thomas (2010-11, Glen Este High School), Madeline Chambers (2009-10, Magnificat), Stephanie Morgan (2008-09, Barnesville) and Claire Durkin (2007-08, Worthington Kilbourne) 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).