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**LIPSCOMB ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE TENNESSEE 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 Barbara Lee Ball of Lipscomb Academy as its 2012-13 Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Ball is the first Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Lipscomb Academy.

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 Ball as Tennessee'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, Ball 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-1 senior raced to the Class A-AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:41.83. The 2012 Tennessean All-Midstate Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Ball was the state's fastest competitor at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships, crossing the line in 18:16.0 to earn 19th place.

Ball has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally at a nursing home and homeless shelter, and recently completed a pair of mission trips to Honduras.

"Barbara Lee Ball is an awesome runner and she has made tremendous improvement the last two years," said Glen Gattis, head coach at Macon County High. "She was a great runner two years ago, but she's even stronger and more determined now."

Ball has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Lipscomb 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.

Ball joins Gatorade Tennessee Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Haley Ward (2011-12, McMinn County High School), Joanna Thompson (2010-11, Knoxville), Megan Ferowich (2009-10, Knoxville Catholic) and Kathy Kroeger (2008-09 & 2007-08, Independence) 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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