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SAINT ANDREW'S SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR

CHICAGO (January 8, 2014) — In its 29th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Louisa Belk of Saint Andrew's School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Belk is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Saint Andrew's 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 Belk as Delaware'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, Belk 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-5 sophomore distance runner won the Division II individual state championship with a time of 18:08.88 this past season, leading the Cardinals to second place as a team. Also the Runner of the Year as named by the New Castle County Coaches Cross Country and Track Association, Belk concluded her first cross-country season unbeaten against Delaware competition.

Belk has maintained a 3.58 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's student activity committee and yearbook staff as well as a violinist in the student orchestra, she has donated her time locally on behalf of the National Girls Collaborative Project, which educates pupils about career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math. She also volunteers as a mentor to an elementary school student.

"Despite being new to the sport, Louisa Belk quickly mastered the skill of training and racing," Saint Andrew's School head coach Wilson Everhart. "She showed tremendous poise despite being challenged by every top runner in a very fast state. Ultimately, she distinguished herself by beating every in-state competitor every time in multiple large invitationals."

Belk 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.

Belk joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Reagan Anderson (2012-13, The Tatnall School), Haley Pierce (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, The Tatnall School), and Juliet Bottorff (2008-09 & 2007-08, The Tatnall School) 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 www.gatorade.com/poy.

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