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**CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE INDIANA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2014) — In its 29<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 Kelcy Welch of Carmel High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Welch is the first Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Carmel 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 Welch as Indiana'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, Welch 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 senior raced to the individual state championship this past season with a time of 17:53.9, leading the Greyhounds to the state title as a team. Welch also won the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 17:34 and finished 17th nationally at the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships. She was 4th at the Nike Cross Nationals Midwest Regional championships, and took 14th at the NXN Final.

Welch has maintained a 4.19 GPA in the classroom. A devoted member of her church youth group, she serves as a mentor to elementary school students and volunteers locally on behalf of an assisted living facility.

"Kelcy was an inspiration," said Carmel coach Mark Ellington. "We had high hopes for a strong team this year, and expected a good effort from Kelcy, but we weren't expecting her to be state champion. She's a very focused person who is very supportive of her teammates, and she has demonstrated great leadership for many years."

Welch 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.

Welch joins Gatorade Indiana Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Anna Rohrer (2012-13, Mishawaka High School), Ashley Erba (2011-12, Warsaw Community High School), Waverly Neer (2010-11 & 2009-10, Culver Academies), Sarah Higgins (2008-09, Center Grove), and Alex Banfich (2007-08, Culver Academies) 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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