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**JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MINNESOTA 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 Bethany Hasz of Jefferson High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Hasz is the first Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Jefferson 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 Hasz as Minnesota'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, Hasz 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 raced to the Class AA individual state championship this past season with a time of 13:53.1. A two-time First Team All-State selection, she also captured first place at the 2013 Nike Cross Nationals Heartland Regional championships, breaking the tape in 17:17.5 and earning a berth in the 2013 Nike Cross Nationals Final, where she placed 13th in 17:54.

Hasz has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, she is an accomplished cellist and has volunteered locally on behalf of Feed My Starving Children and as a youth track and field coach.

"Bethany Hasz is a focused and intense student-athlete," said Jefferson High Mark Nelsen. "She is committed and dedicated to excellence. She has become a student of the sport of cross country at a very young age and is extremely coachable."

Hasz 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.

Hasz joins Gatorade Minnesota Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Maria Hauger (2012-13, 2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, Shakopee High School), Cassy Opitz (2008-09, Eden Prairie), and Laura Hughes (2007-08, Mankato West) 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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