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**STE. GENEVIEVE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE MISSOURI 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 Taylor Werner of Ste. Genevieve High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Werner is the first Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Ste. Genevieve 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 Werner as Missouri'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, Werner 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-2 sophomore distance runner captured fifth place at the Nike Cross Nationals Final with a time of 17:34 and 10th place at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships in 17:44 this past season. The latter performance earned her All-American honors. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Werner won the NXN Midwest Regional championships in 18:36.20 and placed fourth at the Foot Locker Midwest Regional championships in 17:46. Also the two-time Runner of the Year as named by MoMileSplit.com and the Missouri Track & Cross Country Coaches Association, she won a second consecutive Class 3 individual state title with a meet-record time of 17:31.30. Werner was the only prep girl in the country to finish in the top 10 of both national championship races.

Werner has maintained a 3.95 GPA in the classroom. A member of her school's student council, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and President of Sainte Genevieve's National Junior Honor Society chapter, she has volunteered on behalf of a canned food drive, the American Red Cross and her church community. Werner has donated her time to the Adopt-A-Highway and Adopt-A-Family programs in addition to assisting at an annual Christmas dinner for senior citizens.

"Unfortunately, from my perspective, Taylor Werner has been very effective," said John Crites, head coach of rival Festus High. "They're our No. 1 rivalry. It's a friendly rivalry, but every time she does well, our girls don't win. It's pretty impressive what she's done. She's never been beaten by another girl in Missouri cross country. She does it the right way and knows all the idiosyncrasies that go along with being a student of the sport. She's just impressive."

Werner 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.

Two-time winner Werner joins Gatorade Missouri Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Samantha Nightingale (2011-12, Blue Springs South High School), Colleen Quigley (2010-11, Nerinx Hall), Emily Sisson (2009-10 & 2008-09, Parkway Central), and Diane Robison (2007-08, Parkway Central) 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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