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Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)

**CENTENNIAL HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NEVADA 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 Sydney Badger of Centennial High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Badger is the first Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Centennial 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 Badger as Nevada'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, Badger 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-7 senior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:40, leading the Bulldogs to second place as a team. The state's returning Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year, Badger finished 14th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships and 27th at the Foot Locker West Regional championships. She also earned victories at the Central Park Invitational, the Labor Day Classic, the Lake Mead Invitational and the Southern Nevada Regional championships.

Badger has maintained a 3.96 GPA in the classroom. An academic tutor in her school, Badger has volunteered locally on behalf of the Make-a-Wish Foundation and community clean-up initiatives.

"Sydney is passionate about the sport of running and is the hardest-working athlete that I have ever coached," said Centennial High head coach Roy Sessions. "She's a great team leader and mentor too."

Badger has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Michigan beginning in the fall of 2014.

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 Badger joins Gatorade Nevada Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Mary Jo Wright (2011-12, Elko High School), Katie Gorczyca (2010-11, Palo Verde High School), and Kelsey Smith (2009-10, 2008-09 & 2007-08, South Tahoe), 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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