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**AIKEN HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE SOUTH CAROLINA 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 Ashbrook Gwinn of Aiken High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Gwinn is the first Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Aiken 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 Gwinn as South Carolina'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, Gwinn 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 senior distance runner won the Class AAAA individual state championship with a time of 17:58.69 this past season. Also the Runner of the Year as named by The Augusta Chronicle, Gwinn captured 14th place at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 17:39. Concluding the season unbeaten against South Carolina competition, her regional championships performance marked the fastest 5K time in the state this past fall among prep girls.

Gwinn has maintained a 4.00 GPA and ranks No. 3 in her graduating class. A member of her school's National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and National Beta Club chapters, she has volunteered locally on behalf of a literacy-outreach campaign, her church, the Angel Tree holiday gift-giving campaign and the Girls on the Run transformational learning program for youth.

"The discipline that Ashbrook Gwinn shows in her academics and athletic training distinguishes her from the competition," said Aiken head coach Roger Carpenter. "Ashbrook pushes herself to be the best in her academics as well as athletics, and she does it with a smile on her face. She really embraces the hard work that it takes to be an elite student-athlete."

Gwinn 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.

Gwinn joins Gatorade South Carolina Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Logan Morris (2012-13, Spartanburg Christian Academy), Meredith Kilburn (2011-12, Fort Mill High School), Sinead Haughey (2010-11 & 2009-10, Daniel High School), Tameka Jackson (2008-09, Seneca), and Mary Kate DuBard (2007-08, Northwestern) 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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