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**CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE VERMONT 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 Autumn Eastman of Champlain Valley Union High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Eastman is the first Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union 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 Eastman as Vermont'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, Eastman 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-3 senior raced to the Division 1 individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:47.4, leading the Redhawks to the state title as a team. The state's 2012-13 Gatorade Girls Track and Field Athlete of the Year, Eastman took third at both the New England Cross Country Championships and the Nike Cross Nationals Northeast Regional championships. She finished 16th nationally at the NXN Final with a time of 17:56.9.

Eastman has maintained a 4.02 GPA in the classroom. Also a standout Nordic skier, she has volunteered locally on behalf of middle school literacy-outreach initiatives and youth ski programs. She has also donated her time as a tutor in her school.

"Autumn's dedication and work ethic helped turn her into one of the best cross country runners in the entire country," said Champlain Valley Union coach Scott Bliss. "She's the most impressive runner that I have ever coached."

Eastman has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at Georgetown University 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.

Eastman joins Gatorade Vermont Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Elle Purrier (2012-13, 2011-12 & 2010-11, Richford High School), Hannah Rowe (2009-10 & 2008-09, St. Johnsbury Academy), and Sarah Lange (2007-08, Brattleboro Union) 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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