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**WEST SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA 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 Caroline Alcorta of West Springfield High School as its 2013-14 Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Alcorta is the first Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from West Springfield 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 Alcorta as Virginia'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, Alcorta 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 captured third place at the national Foot Locker Cross Country Championships with a time of 17:31 this past season to earn All-American honors. The All-Met Runner of the Year as named by The Washington Post, Alcorta also won the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 16:55, clocking the state's fastest 5K time this past fall among prep girls. She also broke the tape in the Group 6A state meet with a meet-record time of 17:13, concluding her senior season unbeaten against Virginia competition.

Alcorta has maintained a 3.78 GPA in the classroom. A member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Students Against Destructive Decisions, she has donated her time as a youth running instructor for both the Springfield/South County Youth Club and the Irving Track Club.

"Alcorta asserted herself as the top runner in Virginia this season with one dominating performance after another," said Jenn Dietz, head coach of rival West Potomac High. "Just as remarkable as her record-setting season is the humble attitude she has maintained as she has advanced to competing at the national level."

Alcorta has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of North Carolina beginning 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.

Alcorta joins Gatorade Virginia Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Sophie Chase (2012-13 & 2011-12, Lake Braddock High School), Annie LeHardy (2010-11, Hidden Valley High School), Kathleen Stevens (2009-10, Blacksburg), Megan Marsico (2008-09, Glenvar), and Kathleen Lautzenheiser (2007-08, Midlothian) 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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