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**PADUA ACADEMY STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE DELAWARE GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2015) — In its 30th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Lydia Olivere of Padua Academy as its 2014-15 Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Olivere is the first Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Padua Academy.

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 Olivere as Delaware'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, Olivere 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 4-foot-11 freshman won the Division I individual state championship with a time of 18:36.34 this past season, leading the Pandas to the state title as a team. Also presented with the William L. Gerow Award as the state's Runner of the Year by the New Castle County Coaches Association, Olivere took 13th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 18:02.1, clocking Delaware's fastest 5K time among prep competitors this past season.

Olivere has maintained a 3.97 in the classroom. In addition to serving as president of St. Mary Magdalen School's eighth-grade class and receiving the school's spirit award last year, she has donated her time as a homeroom representative and as part of multiple dance committees as a freshman.

"Lydia may be a freshman, but she practiced and competed like a veteran," said Padua Academy head coach Marnie Giunta. "Lydia is very humble in her accomplishments and looks up to her senior teammates. She handled the pressure of being in the spotlight like a pro and never let it get to her while racing. She is goal-oriented, yet is mostly happy to do her best for her team."

Olivere will begin her sophomore 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.

Olivere joins Gatorade Delaware Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Louisa Belk (2013-14, Saint Andrew's School), Reagan Anderson (2012-13, The Tatnall School), Haley Pierce (2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, The Tatnall School), and Juliet Bottorff (2008-09 & 2007-08, The Tatnall School) 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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