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**GREEN HOPE HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED
GATORADE NORTH CAROLINA 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 Elly Henes of Green Hope High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Henes is the first Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Green Hope 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 Henes as North 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, Henes 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-5 junior won the Class 4A individual state championship with a time of 18:02.47 this past season, leading the Falcons to the state title as a team. A two-time All-State honoree, Henes was runner-up at the Nike Cross Nationals Southeast Regional championships in 17:17, and then earned All-American honors at the NXN Final, finishing 21st in 18:11. She took third at the 2013 Class 4A state meet as a sophomore.

Henes has maintained a 3.94 weighted GPA in the classroom. She has volunteered locally on behalf of multiple food banks, community cleanup efforts and the Cary Police Department's drive to provide teddy bears as comfort for distressed children involved in car accidents, house fires and domestic disputes.

"She is an outstanding runner and young lady," said Jerry Dotson, head coach of rival Cary High. "She has made drastic improvements over the past 16 months. She runs with an incredible amount of poise and commitment. She is also a very team-oriented young lady. She is an excellent role model for the younger female runners in our state. Her potential is unlimited. She embodies exactly what Gatorade promotes in an athlete."

Henes will begin her senior 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.

Henes joins Gatorade North Carolina Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Kalya Montgomery (2013-14, Mount Tabor High School), Megan Sullivan (2012-13, Broughton High School), Sammy George (2011-12, Millbrook High School), Darby Middlebrook (2010-11, Watauga High School), Wesley Frazier (2009-10, Ravenscroft School), and Adrienne Soo (2008-09 & 2007-08, Durham Academy), 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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