

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Matt Schiffman (312-729-3672)**

**ROCK SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE WYOMING GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 8, 2015) — In its 30<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 Karli Piaia of Rock Springs High School as its 2014-15 Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Piaia is the second Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Rock Springs 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 Piaia as Wyoming'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, Piaia 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 a Class 4A individual state championship this past season with a time of 18:35.11, leading the Tigers to a second-place finish as a team. A three-time First Team All-State selection, Piaia was the top Wyoming competitor at both the Foot Locker West Regional championships (where she earned 15th place in 19:03.1) and the Nike Cross Nationals Northwest Regional championships, where she finished 22nd in 20:16.

Piaia has maintained a 4.0 GPA in the classroom. A member of the National Honor Society, she has volunteered locally on behalf of the American Humane Society, the Salvation Army and a soup kitchen.

"Karli Piaia is a kind, considerate, humble and intelligent young woman," said Bryan Coventry, head coach at Kelly Walsh High. "She is also, hands down, the best runner in the state."

Piaia has verbally committed to an athletic scholarship at the University of Portland 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.

Piaia joins Gatorade Wyoming Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Anna Gibson (2013-14, Jackson Hole High School), Hailey Ricks (2012-13 & 2011-12, Star Valley High School), Jessica Lemaster (2010-11 & 2007-08, Cheyenne Central High School), Dana Morin (2009-10, Sheridan), and Nicole Peterson (2008-09, Rock Springs), 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).

###