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**Contact: Jason Belenke (312-729-3631)**

**MONTGOMERY CATHOLIC PREPARATORY SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE ALABAMA GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 14, 2016) — In its 31<sup>st</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with USA TODAY High School Sports, today announced Amaris Tynnismaa of Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School as its 2015-16 Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Tynnismaa is the first Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Montgomery Catholic Preparatory 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 Tynnismaa as Alabama'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, Tynnismaa 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-6 freshman distance runner won a second consecutive Class 4A individual state championship with a time of 17:52.25 this past season, leading the Knights to fourth place as a team. The Montgomery Advertiser's two-time All-Metro Female Cross Country Runner of the Year, Tynnismaa took 20th at the Foot Locker South Regional championships in 18:06. Unbeaten against Alabama competition in 2015, her third-place finish of 17:42.54 at the 17th Annual Jesse Owens Classic was the state's fastest 5K among prep competitors this past fall.

Tynnismaa has maintained an A average in the classroom. In addition to donating her time as a mentor and instructor for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, she has volunteered locally on behalf of her church.

"I think she is bringing the girls to a new level with how good she is," said Stephen Bowen, head coach at rival Straughn High. "She is pushing my girls to work harder and get better. She is basically resetting the bar for girls' cross country."

Tynnismaa 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.

Tynnismaa joins Gatorade Alabama Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Kaitlin York (2014-15, American Christian Academy), Karisa Nelson (2013-14, T.R. Miller High School), Carmen Carlos (2012-13, 2011-12, 2010-11 & 2009-10, McGill-Toolen Catholic High School), and Madeline Morgan (2008-09 & 2007-08, Mountain Brook High 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](http://www.gatorade.com/poy).

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